

5 Steps To Rethink Eastern Ontario's Housing Challenge

1. Collaboration

Providing adequate housing is a massive challenge and to date – no one group has been able to ensure housing completions keep pace with both population growth and workforce labour requirements. Many levels of government and key stakeholders will be required to collaborate including: builders, developers, investors, higher education and of course municipal government. Together they must form an organization that coordinates and creates transparent accountability.

2. Capability

Building housing units requires expertise and demands sufficient labour, materials, equipment, land assembly and capital. These elements require other partners including access to capital, opportunity and skilled trades availability.



3. Profitability

Builders require a strategy that provides their expenses to be covered while making an acceptable profit. Builders must prioritize projects based on potential profitability. Just because we need affordable housing does not mean developers should want to build affordable housing. It needs to represent a potential opportunity that meets their required rate of return. New elements like architecture design, civil engineering etc could be performed by government and replicated – thus reducing costs for developers and inducing and elevating the top priorities for the municipality. New tools to cooperate will be defining in the coming years.



4. Regulatory Urgency

The regulatory environment must be permissive not prescriptive. Government officials need to see builders as clients – follow the regulations – but thrill them with support and customer service. Management must develop key performance metrics that induce more development that adheres to standards.

5. Defined Markets

Municipalities need to organize and prioritize their needs. For example; purpose build workforce housing is an urgent need for Eastern Ontario. How can we induce this kind of product development as a community? Student housing and seniors housing are also challenges. Governments need to develop tools to ensure resident's requirements are met. We have a deficiency in multiple markets – residents need new units quickly. The old methodology of meeting demand needs immediate disruption.



The province has provided an ambitious target of 1.5 million units to address the housing crisis. Moreover these homes must be designed in a way to provide an environment where essential workers can raise a family and enrich their lives. This goal must also include proximity to schools, healthcare and parks and recreation assets. Having communities where the needs of diverse income populations can live and grow together must be a central objective. Business as usual is no longer an option. The next decade will define the economic prosperity of communities across Ontario – the communities that adjust, deliver and induce housing will thrive while others will fail while replicating an old out of date formula that no longer provides prosperity for its citizens.