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Attn: Planning and Housing Committee

PH31.13 - Development Activity 2025

Currently, Toronto has approximately 791,000 proposed residential units across roughly 1,700 projects, along with an estimated 8.9 million square metres of non-residential floor area. This pipeline is framed within a target of 285,000 new residential units by 2031.

While this level of activity demonstrates significant capacity and interest from the development sector, it also raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of the planning system in shaping growth in a coordinated and accountable way.

A substantial portion of this pipeline appears to have advanced with limited visible integration of key public service requirements, including schools, hospital capacity, parks, and recreation infrastructure. In many cases, approvals appear to rely heavily on existing zoning permissions or site-specific amendments without clear evidence that broader community infrastructure has been fully planned in parallel.

The current approach too often appears reactive, with decisions influenced by the need to avoid escalation to the Ontario Land Tribunal rather than through a fully assertive, city-led planning framework. This creates a structural imbalance where process pressures can override long-term city-building priorities.

While recent policy initiatives have focused appropriately on streamlining approvals and supporting housing supply, there is insufficient emphasis on ensuring that growth is aligned with environmental protection, tree canopy preservation, and the capacity of municipal infrastructure systems.

The scale of the development pipeline—378,900 projects under review, 297,315 approved, 49,598 in permit application, and 65,224 with permits issued—represents a major transformation of the city. However, it is also clear that approvals do not guarantee delivery. In practice, many projects are strategically staged or delayed in response to market conditions, raising concerns about speculative holding patterns within the land supply system.

The composition of proposed units—heavily weighted toward studios and one-bedroom units—further underscores a mismatch with the city’s pressing need for family-sized and permanently affordable housing options.

The assumption that supply alone will resolve affordability pressures is not supported by recent experience. Between 2006 and 2018, home prices increased by 131% while median incomes rose by only 30%. This gap reflects structural market dynamics that are not being adequately addressed through current policy tools.

Ultimately, the city must reassert a stronger planning function that ensures development occurs where infrastructure (subways, hospitals, schools and community centres) exists—or is planned—and in forms that meet long-term community needs. Development is a necessary and valuable industry, but it must operate within a clear and enforceable framework that prioritizes complete communities, not just unit counts.

Sincerely,



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Cc

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