

Toronto

Ontario needs to add 1 million new homes over next decade to keep up with population growth, report says

It will be a 'monumental challenge' to build this much housing but necessary, says the report's author

[Samantha Beattie](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 09, 2021 4:00 AM ET | Last Updated: October 9



These single family homes being constructed in Vaughan, Ont., will help address the supply gap, but high-density, more affordable units are actually what's needed more, researchers say. (David Donnelly/CBC)

[58](#)

comments

Ontario needs to add one million homes over the next decade to keep up with population growth and address the snowballing supply gap that's already resulting in young families struggling to find a home, according to new research.

It will be a "monumental challenge" to build this much housing, said [report](#) author Mike Moffatt, senior director of policy at the Smart Prosperity Institute, a think tank in Ottawa.

He estimates in a typical year, about 70,000 units of all types are added, from detached houses to condominiums to purpose-built rentals to subsidized units. That number will have to increase to 100,000 to accommodate the expected 2.27 million more people who will live in Ontario by 2031.

"We have never built, at least in my lifetime, at that level in Ontario," Moffatt said in an interview.

"If we're not able to build these homes, it's more [people living in tents](#), getting evicted from parks. It's more families having to drive further and further away from Toronto, further away from their jobs in order to afford a home. It's more people moving to other provinces. It's us losing talent from around the world."

Family-friendly homes needed

Moffatt estimates the province is currently short nearly 65,000 homes, based on recent population growth, and the number of housing that was actually built in recent years. He expects 911,000 more families will be formed in the next 10 years, according to Ministry of Finance projections.



A condo under construction in downtown Toronto in 2019. (John Rieti/CBC)
One million homes would fill the current gap and ensure both existing and new families have a place to live, Moffatt said. Demand will be particularly intense for "family-friendly" homes, where young couples have space to raise one or more children — a trend that's already manifesting, he noted.

"We've got a lot of 20 somethings in the province who are just about ready to start a family," he said. "So we need to make sure that the baby has a new home and there's somewhere for all Ontarians to live."

The way to solve the problem is not to add to urban sprawl but rather build up existing neighbourhoods, particularly along transit lines, he said. The more housing that exists, the more affordable it will be.

The purpose of the report, funded by the Ontario Home Builders' Association, is to spur the city, province and federal government to recognize there's a problem and facilitate the needed growth by legislating increased density, Moffatt said.

Province says its seeing more construction

The provincial government introduced a housing supply action plan in 2019 to address the housing crisis, said ministry spokesperson Melissa Diakoumeas. It's meant to speed up and lower the costs of development approvals and increase housing types and supply.

"After years of not keeping up with demographic growth, Ontario is now moving toward creating enough new homes for every new household," she said.

Construction started on close to 80,000 homes in 2020 — more than any other year in the last decade, Diakoumeas said.

University of Toronto planning Prof. Matti Siemiatycki is also urging governments to move quickly to facilitate more developments of affordable, accessible rental housing and low-rise condominiums to accommodate families — both of which aren't being built nearly fast enough, he said.

"We are in a moment of significant need for investment," Siemiatycki said. "This crisis will not resolve on its own, especially with the level of immigration and growth that we're experiencing."