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Five ways to build better neighbourhoods in the GTA

New report identifies barriers to creating walkable, affordable and transit-connected homes for families

TORONTO — Five simple changes to development rules could help increase the supply of family-friendly mid-rise homes in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), according to a new report from the Pembina Institute and the Ontario Home Builders' Association.

[*Make Way for Mid-Rise: How to build more homes in walkable, transit-connected neighbourhoods*](#) shows how the GTA could build more medium-density housing where it's needed most. Creating more of these homes is critical to accommodate the region's growing population, while still providing affordable choices for families in central neighbourhoods.

The report also has important implications for upcoming transit projects, such as SmartTrack and the Hurontario-Main light rail line. Unless there are strong requirements for higher-density development along new transit lines, the region is squandering opportunities to create thousands of new homes and businesses where people want to live and work.

Quick facts

- In many GTA municipalities, new housing developments must provide parking spaces. These can add \$50,000 to the cost of a housing unit for homebuyers, but are often unnecessary in walkable and transit-connected neighbourhoods.
- Ontario is investing billions into rapid transit across the GTA. The province has the power to require higher-density development along new transit lines, which many municipalities are failing to do.
- In the 905, as much as \$37,000 of the cost of a condominium can go to paying for parkland, while the same costs for a detached home are much lower. This drives up the price of mid-rise housing and limits homebuyers' choices in the GTA.

Quotes

“It doesn’t have to be this way. Small changes in the rules can make a big difference in terms of what type of housing gets built. We’ve see that with recent changes to Ontario’s building code, allowing for taller wood-frame buildings. This report highlights similar opportunities to expand the range of housing options in communities across the region.”

— *Mike Collins-Williams, Director of Policy, Ontario Home Builders’ Association*

“The GTA is growing at an extraordinary pace, but without the right rules and incentives, that growth won’t take the ideal shape. We need to capitalize on opportunities to build around transit lines and to provide more family-friendly, medium-density housing options.”

— *Cherise Burda, Ontario Director, Pembina Institute*

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Visit the Pembina Institute’s website to download a copy of [Make Way for Mid-Rise](#).

This report is an initiative of the [GTA Housing Action Lab](#), a cross-sector collaboration working to deliver scalable solutions to the issues of housing affordability and sustainability.

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Background

Report: [Location Matters: Factoring location costs into homebuying decisions](#)

Report: [2014 Home Location Preference Survey: Understanding where GTA residents prefer to live and commute](#)

Report: [Tools To Support Intensification](#)

Report: [*Priced Out: Understanding the factors affecting home prices in the GTA*](#)