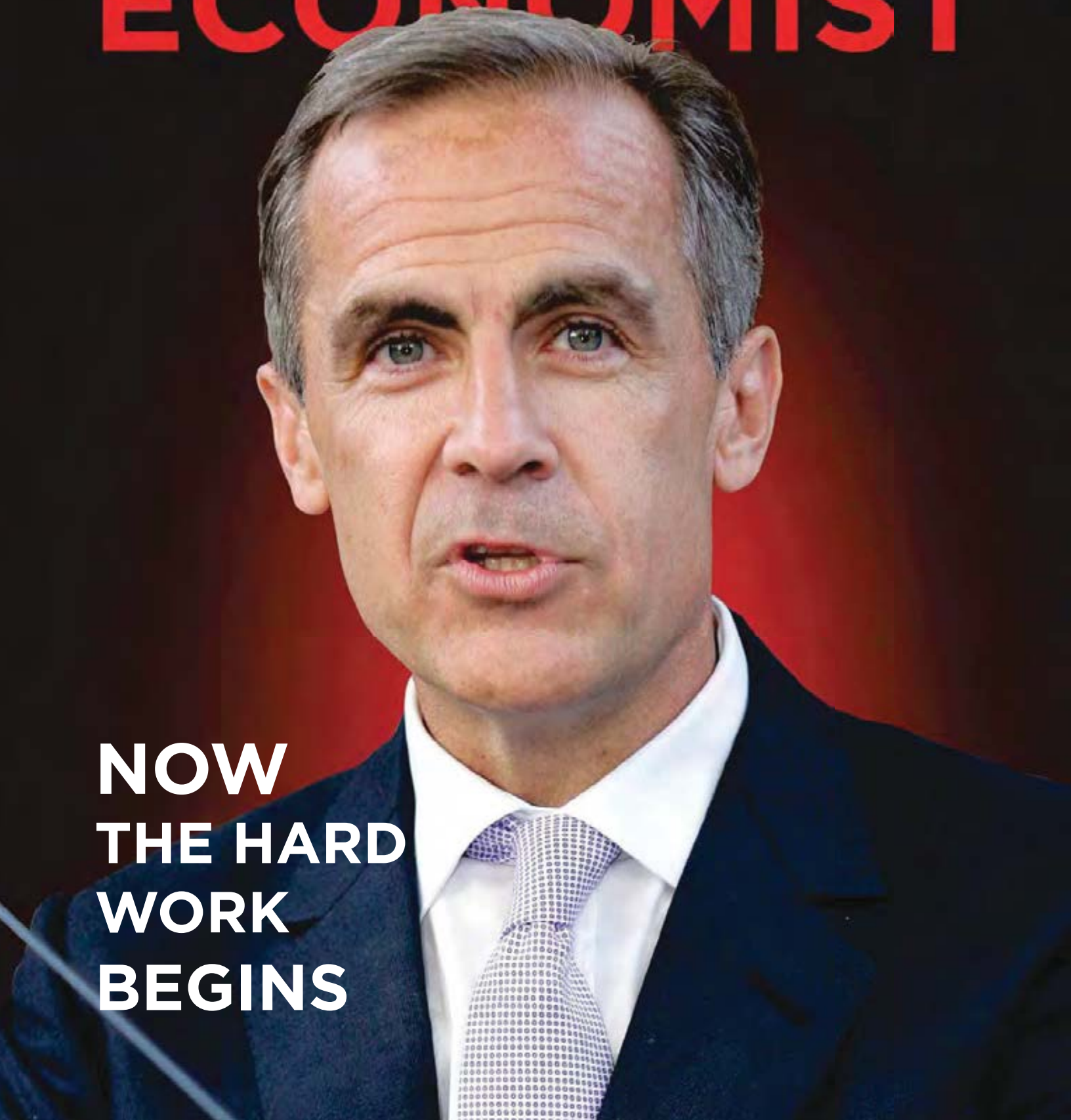




THE LAND ECONOMIST

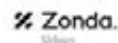
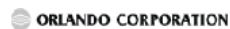
**NOW
THE HARD
WORK
BEGINS**





Association of
Ontario Land Economists

THE COMPANY WE KEEP



The Association of Ontario Land Economists

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ASSOCIATION
OF ONTARIO
LAND ECONOMISTS

SAVE THE DATE

Annual General Meeting
Cocktails & Dinner
Panel Discussion

June 12th 2025
5:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Location:
Deloitte, 8 Adelaide Street
West

Full details coming soon to the
AOLE website and by email to
the membership.

Cover photo credit:
"Mark Carney (cropped)" by Policy Exchange, is licensed under CC BY 2.0
We removed the background banner from the image.

Prime Minister Mark Carney Now the Hard Work Begins!

By Leslie Savlov, Copy Editor of The Land Economist

The champagne flutes are washed and put away and the victory celebration is now over. Now the hard part begins. Prime Minister Mark Carney as we write is packing his bags and getting ready to fly off to Washington in a few days to meet President Trump to begin initial trade deal discussions. He also has to choose his cabinet and see to it that a throne speech with the government's priorities is prepared for [King Charles to present to Parliament on May 27th](#). Of course, the Liberals will have to ensure the throne speech is not defeated in the House of Commons and that they maintain the confidence of the House probably by getting an agreement with one or more of the other parties to vote in favour of it.

Once they get these housekeeping matters cleared, they will get down to the most important matters that face the nation. First of all, dealing with the bloody tariffs and future nation to nation trade talks with Trump and his handlers. Carney will also need to follow through with building trade relationships with Britain, France, other European nations and other countries as he talked about during the campaign. He will need to follow through on his promise to [table legislation removing federal internal trade barriers by July 1st, so that goods can move across the provinces and territories free of those barriers](#). In addition he pledged to remove federal labour mobility restrictions that exist for federally regulated professions, but it wasn't clear from his remarks if that was to be included by July 1st as well. Carney's government will also have their hands full dealing with the issues of protecting Canadian sovereignty, affordable housing, development of our critical mineral reserves and dealing with climate change.

In this Issue of The Land Economist, we have articles exploring some of these important issues.

See our article on page 5 by Mike O'Dwyer entitled "*Globalization, Tariffs, Environment And More*".

On page 22 we have an article by Canadian Armed Forces Commander Norm Normand about what is needed to protect Canadian sovereignty in our Northern regions.

On Page 13 we have an article on housing development.

In our next Issue we will feature an article about mining, minerals, and gaseous substances which will review where things stand in Canada and around the world and especially what it means for Ontario- since after all we are the Association of Ontario Land Economists, an association established over 60 years ago with a primary focus on matters that affect our province.



"Mark Carney (cropped)" by Policy Exchange, is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The next issue will also explore further, Arctic Sovereignty and where things stand with the potential use of airships and drones to transport critical minerals out of Northern Ontario and also their use to patrol our remote Northern regions to protect Canadian sovereignty. Reports have suggested that developing and deploying such crafts could be accomplished significantly sooner and at less cost than building roads and other infrastructure.

We hope you find our coverage of these issues informative and interesting.

May 2, 2025 🐦



Globalization, Tariffs, Environment and More

By Mike O'Dwyer

Interesting Stuff from Here and There

Apparently we were globalists before we knew it

A few decades ago, I wrote a speech for the CEO of a major Canadian corporation on this new thing called *globalization* and what it would mean for Canadian businesses.

Back then, I spent 60 minutes of my client's (and his audience's) time explaining the concept of *globalization*. Apparently, defining it is still a work in progress. Below, I offer a definition derived from the US [Library of Congress/Research Guides](#) webpage. On that same webpage, you will find a list of weighty tomes – and by weighty, I mean real doorstoppers – on every imaginable aspect of globalization. Or maybe not every aspect because there are also links to other 'internet resources (that) provide further definitions on globalization'.

Globalization: a definition

"Most agree that globalization rests upon, or simply is, the growth in international exchange of goods, services, and capital, and the increasing levels of integration that characterize economic activity. In this sense, globalization, is only another word for internationalization. Importantly, it is economic activity that is fuel and furnace of cross-border integration."

By whatever definition you choose, I'm sure you'll agree that *globalization* quickly came to have a profound effect on our business and personal lives in myriad ways. And according to a pair of obscure research papers, it has been affecting lives on planet earth for a lot longer than any of us realized:



AI Generated Image

When did globalization begin? National bureau of economic research

"Some world historians attach globalization "big bang" significance to 1492 (Christopher Columbus stumbles on the Americas in search of spices) and 1498 (Vasco da Gama makes an end run around Africa and snatches monopoly rents away from the Arab and Venetian spice traders). Such scholars are on the side of Adam Smith who believed that these were the two most important events in recorded history. Other world historians insist that globalization stretches back even earlier."¹

An interpretation of globalization in historical perspective: preconditions, periodization and dimensions -- Alexandre Ottoni Teatini Salles

"Many scholars have discussed the causes and consequences of it based on what has taken place in the last few decades, normally starting in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, the phenomenon has precedents in history, which means, it is not an exclusive occurrence of the capitalism of the late 20th century."

Contrarian Views

Is globalization here to stay?

No – according to former Lithuania foreign minister, [Gabrielius Landsbergis](#): "(Globalization has) *had its moment, and now we'll see what's next*".

No -- Goodbye Globalization (2024 Axiom Business Book Awards gold medallist) – author Elisabeth Braw explores the collapse of globalization and the profound challenges it will bring to the West.

TARIFF-ying News ...

Trump's terrible tariffs might well hasten the end of Globalization by forcing the realignment/abandonment of international supply chains as countries look inward and away from the US to avoid or diminish the effect of draconian tariffs.

Another voice also says globalization is done and dusted – with a boot from Trump

The Global Trading System Was Already Broken

"But There's a Better Way to Fix It Than a Reckless Tariff Regime", according to an article by Michael Pettis in *Foreign Affairs*.

¹ Source © 2000 by Kevin H. O'Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson: NBER Working Paper Series, Working Paper 7632 April 2000

The sweeping tariffs announced by U.S. President Donald Trump on April 2, along with the subsequent postponements and retaliations, have unleashed an enormous amount of global uncertainty. Much of the world's attention is on the chaotic, short-term consequences of these policies: wild stock market fluctuations, concerns about the U.S. bond market, fears of a recession, and speculation about how different countries will negotiate or react.

But whatever happens in the near term, this much is clear: Trump's policies reflect a transformation of the global trade and capital regime that had already started. One way or another, a dramatic change of some kind was necessary to address imbalances in the global economy that have been decades in the making.

As Trump's tariff tumult rages on, here are a few examples that prove the *law of unintended consequences* ...

Sweeping global tariffs will significantly raise the costs of renewable energy

"... making it harder for US Big Tech companies to meet their data center energy needs", Semafor's Tim McDonnell writes:

"Higher costs will be passed on to energy consumers at a moment when ... renewables are still the cheapest and most readily available solution to the looming US power deficit. Tariffs on critical minerals, steel, aluminum, and components for power transformers will also make energy projects of all kinds more expensive."

Tariffs might bring to halt the battery boom for the US grid

Bloomberg news writes that "Lithium iron phosphate (LFP) is the preferred chemistry for grid batteries, and most of it comes from China. [BNEF](#) estimates that Trump's additional duties on Chinese imports would translate into a 17.5% increase in storage battery prices by 2026, beyond the cost rise that would have happened as a result of former President Joe Biden's tariff decisions.

BCG's [Boston Consulting Group] calculations show that roughly 85% of all materials in US-made batteries are imported. (Because they cannot be replaced overnight) BNEF estimates virtually all battery separators, 83% of battery cathodes, and 67% of battery anodes would need to be imported in 2025 to meet local demand. That will simply raise the prices of batteries in the US in the short term."

Yay Canada! Terrible tariffs manufacture new opportunities

[Semafor Flagship Reports](#): "US President Donald Trump's tariffs may spark a revival of Canada's manufacturing industry. A "made in Canada" movement promoting home-produced goods is gathering pace amid a sweeping anti-America backlash triggered by the levies, while politicians are encouraging "reshoring" to hedge against pressure from Washington.

Canada's resources and trade links mean it has the potential to be an economic "superpower," an economist wrote in The Financial Times, and tariffs could push Ottawa to make

the reforms — such as simplifying its tax system and easing foreign investment rules — that would allow it to do so."

Wipe out!

[Andrew Smith, Bloomberg, as summarized by Numlock News](#): "A doubling of the tariff on Canadian softwood lumber is poised to have major ramifications for American consumers, as the administration weighs levies over 50 percent. Lumber tariffs north of 50 percent will close sawmills in Canada, decimating the supply of the wood chips that become northern bleached softwood kraft pulp, which today sells for \$900 per ton. This will hit the United States where it hurts, as [NBSK](#) is about 30 percent of your standard bathroom tissue roll, is half of a paper towel roll and the U.S. imported 2 million tons of it from Canada last year."

(Editorial Note: Someone much smarter than me (my wife) said: The only people who will profit from Trump's tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber are lumber smugglers.)

Dam, those beavers!

If you jump into *The Way Back Machine* and revisit [The Land Economist Magazine, Spring 2023/Vol 53 No.1](#), you'll find an article on the mighty beaver, that flat-tailed, buck-toothed industrious rodent that, among other things, is a boon to the environment. Here's more proof from the Czech Republic ...

Beavers build planned dams in protected landscape area, while local officials still seeking permits

"A beaver colony in the Brdy region (of the Czech Republic) has gained overnight fame by building several dams in the Brdy protected landscape area, creating a natural wetland exactly where it was needed. It saved the local authorities 30 million crowns, and has the public cracking jokes about public administration and red tape."

Zoologist Jiri Vlček said, "*Beavers are able to build a dam in one night, two nights at the most. While people have to get building permits, get the building project approved, and find the money for it. But of course a digger working on his own could build it in about a week.*"

Jaroslav Obermajer, head of the Central Bohemian office of the Czech Nature and Landscape Protection Agency (AOPK) said, "*Beavers always know best. The places where they build dams are always chosen just right - better than when we design it on paper,*"



Natural dams created by beavers in Brdy.
Photo: Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic

And in Canada, two boffo beaver tales ... Hurray for the Canadian beaver

Celebrating 50 years as the official symbol of Canada. And now an icon of Canadian resistance (repugnance!) in the face of US President Donald Trump's terrible tariffs and blathering about making Canada the 51st state.



Image generated by AI.

Here's more from the [Canadian Heritage Instagram](#) account:



Behold! The World's Largest Beaver Dam

Lucas Reilly
March 2025

"In 2007, an ecologist named Jean Thie was scanning the Alberta wilderness with Google Earth in an effort to study [permafrost](#) thaw in the Canadian wild. But then something unusual appeared on his

screen: A beaver dam so huge, it was more than twice the length of the [Hoover Dam](#).

[Located](#) in Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, Canada, the world's largest beaver dam is at least 2790 feet long. It likely contains thousands of trees and appears to have required the handiwork of at least two beaver families. It's believed the beavers began the construction project up to three decades ago."

"This isn't the only record-breaking beaver home in Canada, either. Pakwaw Lake, Saskatchewan, has what is likely the highest density of beaver dams in that country, and possibly the world—more than 20 dams and lodges per square kilometer (or about 247 acres)."



Not very scenic but it is the beaver dam to end all beaver dams -- so big, you can see it from space. Photo Courtesy of Parks Canada

Here's mud in your ... wall [Mud May Be an Environmentally Friendly Way to Cut Construction Costs](#)

According to researchers from MIT, mud may be the answer to building concrete-based buildings quickly and efficiently, while cutting costs and reducing emissions.

MIT doctoral student, Sandy Curth, said in a news release that the 3-D printer process dubbed 'Earthworks', replaces wooden formwork with " ... mud or waste soil from a construction site and transform it into accurate, highly complex, an flexible formwork for customized concrete structures."

Wooden it be wonderful!

In the [Fall 2024/Vol 54 No.2](#) issue of this magazine, Pat Brennan penned a piece about the University of New Brunswick constructing a new building with mass timber.

[Based on more recent news](#), building with wood is getting even bigger in Wisconsin – led by a Canadian architectural firm.

The Ascent MKE apartment complex in Milwaukee is currently the tallest timber building in the world. But it won't be for long, although Milwaukee will retain its title for wooden behemoths.

Michael Green Architects (MGA) of Vancouver recently released plans for a multi-tower timber project planned for 55 stories – and at 500 feet in height, it will be more than double the height of the Ascent.

As with the University of New Brunswick, MGA will use mass timber (AKA engineered wood) that is cheaper and more environmentally friendly than concrete.



Marcus Centre Rendering

The 1.2 million square-foot project – to be known as the Marcus Centre – will include 750 residences, as well as offices, hotel rooms, retail space, and public areas.

Sweden: Where one wooden building isn't enough

Stockholm Wood City is set to be the world's largest city built entirely out of timber. The practice of using wood as a primary construction material began to decline in the 19th century, but fire-proofed engineered wood is bringing it back into play more regularly, and the upcoming development in Sweden aims to be a model for countries around the world.

Envisioned as a vibrant urban zone featuring a mix of housing, office spaces, restaurants, and shops, Wood City will include 7,000 office spaces and 2,000 homes – vastly expanding available space in Stockholm's over-crowded real estate sector while keeping its environmental footprint to a minimum.



Stockholm Wood City Rendering

And Toronto says, “If only!” Greater Paris invests big to create unique public transport service

Between 2016 and 2026, €22 billion (\$32.7 billion Canadian) has been invested in the French capital's underground rail network, the busiest on the planet after Tokyo's, with 9.4 million riders per day. Service had deteriorated and prices increased after the pandemic but the 10-year funding influx has resulted in three new services

opening in the last few months alone. The Grand Paris Express system adds 120 miles of lines and 68 new stations to the network and will be entirely automated.

Compare Paris's €22 billion price tag with the same amount to build a single line in London, England, and New York's still-incomplete Second Avenue Subway, expected to cost \$17 billion.

Then there's Toronto's yet-to-be completed lines currently estimated to cost approximately \$27.2 billion (original estimate \$10.9 billion). The 15.6 kilometre-lines will eventually have 15 stops, running from the former Science Centre at Eglinton Avenue and Don Mills Road, to Exhibition Place at the waterfront. It was announced in 2019 and is expected to be complete by 2031.

How about that!

Hey, grandpa, what's a parking lot?

Self-driving cars (aka Electric Autonomous Vehicles – AV's) could change the ways cities are designed – by making parking lots obsolete.

Sam Harsimony of Splitting Infinity makes this argument:

“One of the biggest perks of self-driving cars is their ability to park themselves. They can bring you directly to your destination. No parallel parking. No competing for a spot while the backseat yells suggestions. No squinting at parking rules. Just get out at the doorstep and let your car glide away.

The car could use a parking space nearby, but there's an opportunity to completely decouple parking spaces from human spaces.

Parking takes up almost a quarter of the land in city centers. This prevents cities from achieving a gentle density by stretching everything out.”

“To get the full benefits of self-parking, we need to reclaim all of the land used for flat parking spaces and use a tall, dense parking structure for AV's. Since people won't need to use the structure, we can do away with amenities like lighting, fire sprinklers, railings, ventilation, stairs, and high ceilings.”

“Life would be markedly different in such a city. Commuting is as simple as being picked up at the edge of your town, reading in the car as it swings around the city, and hopping out at the door to your office. Walking from town to town, cars buzz under the bridges; they punctuate city life rather than dominate it.

Shopping is a thing of the past, replaced by direct deliveries and visits to sample shops. When you go to a new block, it's for the people and the atmosphere. The insulated interiors are filled with cafe's, restaurants, offices, libraries, and parks.”

“Agglomeration makes everyone more productive and the density preserves the wild lands at the edge of the metropolis. With foresight, self-driving cars are an opportunity to build a better city around them.”

Salt of the earth

Coastal salt marshes tackle climate change

According to a study published in *The Journal of Geophysical Research*, researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst found that New England's salt marshes store 10 million cars' worth of carbon and add approximately 15,000 additional cars' worth each year.

Lead author Wenxiu Teng explained in a statement: "The amazing thing about tidal marshes, from a climate perspective, is that they can continuously increase their carbon storage. They don't fill up."

"Salt marshes are crucially important ecosystems for all sorts of reasons," Teng said. "Now we know that they're rich not only in terms of biodiversity, but also in terms of helping the planet to weather the worst of climate change."

Branching out

Tapping into a new maple market

Coconut water is so yesterday – at least, Canadian maple syrup producers hope so. Introducing *maple water*!

Keena Al-Wahaidi of BBC News writes:

Canada, looking jealously at what the coconut-producing nations of the world have pulled off with coconut water, would like to get the world drinking maple water. Maple syrup is produced by boiling down the sap of maple trees, even though the sap itself is very tasty on its own: clear and slightly sweet. Canada is responsible for 80 percent of maple syrup production, and producers are eyeing more ways to put the trees to work. Global sales of maple water are at \$506 million, and projections have them hitting \$2.6 billion by 2033. There's lots of room to grow; coconut water sales reached \$7.7 billion in 2023 and look to hit \$22.9 billion by 2029.

Will crop dusters drone on?

Remember that frightening scene in the 1959 Alfred Hitchcock movie *North by Northwest*? The one where Cary Grant is attacked by a crop-dusting biplane? Well, it would seem Alfred would have to rethink – and reshoot – that scene for our modern times because ... the drones are taking over!

Maybe.



AI Generated Image

Here's what Alex Fitzpatrick wrote for Axios:

"Forget the low-flying crop-dusting planes of yesteryear — some farmers are now turning to drones to apply pesticides, drop seeds and more.

Crop-dusting is both dangerous and increasingly a lost art, as professional pilots seek safer and better-paying jobs at the airlines and elsewhere.

- Electric drones are also cleaner and quieter than your typical spray plane or helicopter, some of which still run on leaded gasoline.
- These aren't the backpack-size drones you may have seen buzzing around your local park. They're about the size of a small tractor, can carry up to 200 lbs. and can cover an area of up to 60 acres per hour.
- Drones can also be more efficient than old-school crop-dusters, as the necessary chemicals or other payload can be left beside a field and the drone can fly back and forth to refill as needed for a given job, rather than having to return to a runway."

New Yorkers stoop to conquer isolation and crime

A stoop is a small staircase in a platform and leading to the entrance of an apartment building or other building.

• Wikipedia

Stoops are an iconic, cherished aspect of life in many neighborhoods in New York City. These stairways provide New Yorkers with a place to relax, gather with friends, and interact with neighbors. This [video](#) by Harrison Brown traces stoops' history and evolution, from their Dutch origins to their role in contemporary urban life. While at first glance they may simply seem like an archaic architectural feature, their function is anything but trivial. Jane Jacobs helped popularize stoops' role in supporting casual public interactions and contributing to public safety by placing "eyes on the street." From stoop sales to block parties to everything in between, stoops are part of what makes New York, New York.



Water you waiting for?

A foggy, foggy dew does it

The Atacama Desert in northern Chile rarely sees rain. In fact, it is the driest place on earth, outside of a few valleys in Antarctica.

It's such an inhospitable place, that it's used as a proxy for Mars by researchers.

Yet, people have found a way to live there in a few coastal towns, including Iquique, the regional capital of 230,000 people, and Alto Hospicio, a town that has grown by 40,000 people in the past few years thanks to a **lithium mining** boom.

An underground aquifer that supplies the area's fresh water is drying up. Desalination plants fill some of the need but they are expensive and energy intensive and most supply mining operations not people.

The solution (literally!) to the area's water crisis: fog harvesting.

Lauren Leffer writes in Popular Science:

"An analysis in the journal *Frontiers in Environmental Science* suggests fog harvesting could meet the needs of Alto Hospicio's informal settlements, providing as much as 300,000 liters per week to 10,300 people, who mostly live disconnected from the formal water distribution system. Currently, they rely on the disappearing aquifer, but that water is delivered to them via trucks instead of pipes, upping the cost and reducing reliability and accessibility. For inhabitants of these settlements, the water supply is even shakier than for the rest of the city's residents, and thus fog offers an even bigger opportunity. Beyond drinking water, fog harvesting could also be used to irrigate green spaces in the region, or to fuel hydroponic agriculture—offering people a cheap source of locally grown, fresh food."

"Fog harvesting [uses] a fine plastic mesh, like the type that might be used to shade heat-sensitive garden beds, is strung across two support poles a few feet in the air. A gutter beneath the mesh channels the moisture that condenses on the panel into a storage container, so it can be readily collected. The more panels and greater surface area of mesh used, the more water is harvested.

Unlike the aquifer beneath the Atacama, fog water is a potentially renewable resource. Low clouds routinely get churned up from the Pacific and blow overland. Without the mesh, the moisture evaporates in the dry air as the temperature rises each day, but with it, the fog would be only temporarily waylaid—providing valuable fresh water to people, before it's treated and cycled back into the ocean."

"Before the dream becomes a reality though, further work is needed."

White – the coolest colour

Reuters reports: Indian slums get 'cool roofs' to combat extreme heat

"Hundreds of roofs in the informal settlements of India's western Gujarat state have been painted in a reflective, white coating over the last two months to try to keep their occupants cooler as the hottest time of year approaches.

The effort, which involves 400 households in Ahmedabad, is part of a global scientific trial to study how indoor heat impacts people's health and economic outcomes in developing countries - and how "cool roofs" might help."

"As climate change has made India's summers more extreme, Ahmedabad has suffered temperatures in excess of 46 C (115 F) in recent years.

"Early results ... show that cool roofs reduced indoor temperature by between 1.2 C in tin- and mud-roofed homes, and 1.7 C in tin-roofed homes over two years, which subsequently lowered residents' heart rates."

If I had a hammer, I could get a job!

Semafor Flagship Reports: "Some US schools are reviving "shop class" — working with wood, metal, and machinery — as a means to future-proof their students' education against artificial intelligence. Many experts believe that AI will likely have the greatest impact on white-collar jobs — coders, lawyers, journalists — but it can not yet tackle the manual work of manufacturing, the skilled trades, or construction.

Meanwhile, a skilled industrial labor shortage has driven up pay, and the costs of higher education have skyrocketed. These trends have pushed schools to reopen their workshops." ➡



Fog collector

Photo source: *Carter V, Verbrugghe N, Lobos-Roco F, del Río C, Albornoz F and Khan AZ (2025), Unlocking the fog: assessing fog collection potential and need as a complementary water resource in arid urban lands—the Alto Hospicio, Chile case. Front. Environ. Sci. 13:1537058. doi: 10.3389/fenvs.2025.1537058 CC BY 4.0*

GTHA's Port Authority is Expanding Lake Ontario's Harbour Facilities

By Pat Brennan



Freighter loading corn in Hamilton Harbour Photos courtesy of HOPA



Larissa Fenn, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, HOPA

Hamilton has the largest harbour on Lake Ontario and it generates thousands of large trucks rolling along the highways of the Golden Horseshoe.

Larissa Fenn is looking to greatly reduce those trips by expanding the harbour. She sits on the harbour's board of directors and is supervising its expansion throughout Ontario.

Fenn is vice-president of corporate affairs with [HOPA](#), the new administration for Hamilton harbour that now includes Oshawa harbour, the smallest industrial port on Lake Ontario. And HOPA (Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority) is now operating a new harbour on the Welland Canal by repurposing an abandoned pulp and paper mill. More than 3,000 ships sail past the site each year.

In Oshawa, HOPA spent \$35 million to create a new grain handling silo to fill Great Lakes freighters and that will take 14,000 trucks off the highways in Metro Toronto.

Grain farmers in Durham Region and east of Toronto used to truck their grain to Hamilton to be shipped around the world.



Freighter loading soybeans in Oshawa harbour



Freighter entering Hamilton Harbour

The Oshawa grain elevator was built on a new dock designed to accommodate the largest ships on the Great Lakes.

And the pier facilities in Thorold on the Welland Canal will absorb truck loads of cargo produced in the Niagara Region which traditionally was trucked to Hamilton Harbour.

HOPA established the Thorold site in partnership with MBI, a Dutch firm that repurposes abandoned brownfield sites.

The 500-acre Thorold site was the home of Ontario Pulp and Paper Company that produced newsprint for the Chicago Tribune and New York Daily News using timber brought by ship from the north shore of the St. Lawrence River near Baie Comeau.

The rolls of newsprint produced there were sent to Chicago and New York by ship.

“Transportation by water is the cheapest and most efficient way of moving bulk cargo and many industries are looking for that advantage by locating on navigable water,” said Fenn.

Canada’s largest sugar refinery will open this year in Hamilton Harbour. [Sucro Can](#) is spending \$135 million to produce the refinery at the foot of Sherman St. N. where it connects with Hamilton Harbour.

The refinery will produce 1 million tonnes a year of refined sugar used mostly by the food processing industry. Ships bringing raw sugar to the refinery will tie up against Randall Reef, a unique structure in the southeast corner of Hamilton Harbour built to contain contaminated soil and debris dredged off the harbour floor.

It had been one of the most contaminated sites on the Great Lakes with [polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons \(PAHs\)](#). These carcinogenic toxins were deposited in the harbour over the last century by the heavy industries lining the harbour, such as steel mills.

Stelco was a major contributor to the \$138.9 million cost of building and filling Randal Reef with contamination.

[BMI Group](#), HOPA’s partner on the new Welland Canal harbour, recently sold a brownfield site in Port Colborne on the Welland Canal to the Japanese firm [Asahi Kasei](#) to build a \$1.6 billion plant to manufacture separators for the lithium-ion batteries Honda will use in its new electric cars, assembled in Alliston.

Construction has already begun on the plant which is expected to employ 300 people. Plant construction will create 500 jobs.

Niagara College is expanding onto HOPA’s Multimodal Hub in Thorold to conduct trade courses related to transportation.

The hub has railway and highway connections as well as the waters of the Welland Canal.

The new sugar refinery in Hamilton is expected to bring an additional \$1 billion in industry growth to the harbour. Its refined sugar is used by the agri-food industry which now accounts for 31 per cent of all cargo handled by HOPA in Hamilton. ➤



Aerial photo of HOPA’s future wharf site on the Welland Canal in Port Colborne.



Pat Brennan is a freelance writer and former real estate editor at the Toronto Star. You can reach Pat by phone at 647-898-9717 or at travelswithlefty@gmail.com

HOUSING *DEVELOPMENTS*



By Mike O'Dwyer

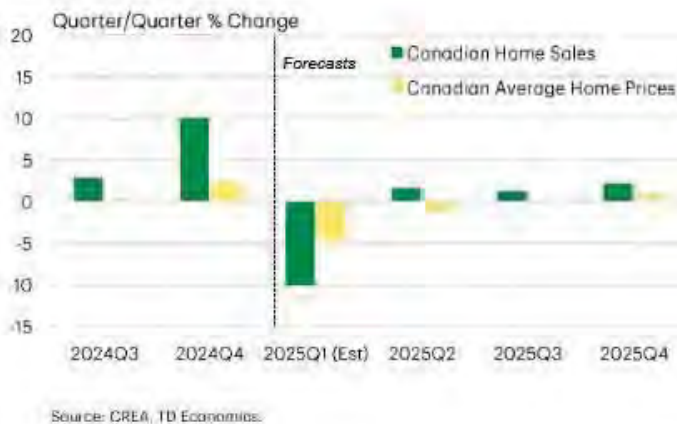
What's happening in housing here, there and elsewhere

HERE

Provincial Housing Outlook: Housing on Shaky Foundation Amid Tariff Turbulence

TD Forecast, March 2025

Chart 1: Economic Uncertainty to Weigh on Housing in 2025



Highlights From TD Economics' Report:

- The one-two punch of winter storms and tariff-related economic uncertainty sent a chill through Canadian housing markets in the first quarter. We're now tracking a double-digit quarterly decline in Canadian home sales and a mid-single digit drop in Canadian average home prices. These outcomes are much weaker than our pre-Trump inauguration forecast made in December, where we assumed that a loosening in federal mortgage rules, lower interest rates and continued economic growth would fuel a modest Q1 gain in sales and prices.
- This much softer starting point has us led to materially mark down our 2025 annual average growth forecasts for Canadian home sales and prices. Moving forward, it's unlikely that activity will be as weak as it was in the first quarter. However, we still think that elevated uncertainty and a deteriorating jobs market will yield subdued sales and price growth for much of 2025 (Chart 1).
- 2025 home price forecasts have been cut the most in B.C. and Ontario, where we now think that prices will decline in annual average terms this year. This reflects muted demand conditions in both markets and supply/demand balances that are heavily

skewed in the favour of buyers. Of note, the GTA condo market is particularly soft, which will weigh on prices in Ontario this year. Elsewhere, 2025 quarterly price growth forecasts have been marked down to sub-trend levels in other parts of the country. We're retaining our view that quarterly price gains will outperform in the Prairies moving forward given relatively tight supply/demand balances and comparatively better affordability.

- An improving backdrop should set the stage for a notable rebound in home sales and average home prices in 2026. Specially, hiring should improve as we're assuming a dialing back in tariff-related uncertainty for tariff assumptions ... underpinning our economic projections. At the same time, interest rates should be at multi-year lows. These factors will facilitate the release of significant pent-up demand. However, the scale of bounce-back in Canadian average home prices will likely be restrained by poor affordability in key markets like B.C. and Ontario.

Canada's housing market was poised for a comeback. Then trade war jitters set in

(Jason Kirby, Globe and Mail, April 2025) "Over the past quarter-century, Canada's housing market has brushed off every crisis that has come its way. It may finally have met its match in the erratic policies of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Sales have plummeted in recent months, pulling prices down with them, while the stock of unsold homes – many of them shoebox-sized condo units in Toronto and Vancouver that were popular with investors but did little to meet the needs of families – is piling up.

With consumer confidence at the lowest level on record and the trade war threatening to both increase the rate of inflation and tip Canada into recession, many experts now expect that housing will create significant drag on the economy."

Toronto's housing sector seeing change amid pivot to purpose-built rentals

John Lorinc, Globe and Mail
April 3, 2025 Updated April 4, 2025

"Institutional and private investors have traditionally sought to add rental properties, with their very stable revenue streams, to their portfolios. And market conditions seem to be providing more investment opportunities...(S)luggish condo pre-sales have made it exceedingly difficult for builders to launch condo projects at the moment, despite falling interest rates."

"Yet the ongoing evolution from a condo-dominated development sector to one that produces purpose-built rental turns on the behaviour and expectations of real estate investors.

The reason? Condo builders don't need much of their own equity to get a project started and can recoup their upfront investment, plus profit, within a decade. Most obtain critical construction loans when they've presold about 65 to 75 per cent of the units and can then pay them back as soon as the project is completed.

Firms building purpose-built rental, on the other hand, need a lot more equity to secure project financing because they don't have access to all the preconstruction capital pledged by those who buy units up front. Rather, they'll be paying down those mortgages for decades.

Rentals, consequently, attract investors with longer time horizons and lower return expectations due to the well-recognized steadiness of the income generated by rental properties. "

Boah Rechtsman, EVP at Hullmark, developers of a pending 18-storey rental project at 450 Dufferin Street, Toronto, says "the transition from speculation-fueled condo development to purpose-built rental speaks to a broader change in Toronto's housing sector.

'As cities have developed to be more metropolitan, it's become increasingly more difficult to buy. That's true of major cities like New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, and obviously many others. If you were to walk into a coffee shop in New York, and ask for a show of hands of who rents versus who owns, you would have the majority of people that rent. We are certainly moving in the direction because there just wasn't very much rental stock built for the better part of 30 years. Now, in the last 10 years, that's really changing.'"



Renderings of the purpose-built rental project at 450 Dufferin St., in Toronto. Superkul

THERE

South of the fentanyl line border markets could use a shot in the arm

US HOUSING NEWS

Remember those halcyon pre-COVID days when there was no housing crisis and residential prices were predictable (and rising)? Oh, and before climate change shredded actuarial tables?

Well, buckle up because you ain't seen nothin' yet, at least according to this report from the US:

Property Prices in Peril

First Street's Property Prices in Peril report estimates that adjusting the values of US homes to accurately reflect their exposure to climate risk would wipe \$1.5 trillion in value off the market.



AI Created Image

"Valued at \$50 trillion, residential real estate is the bedrock of the U.S. economy - nearly double the country's \$27.4 trillion GDP", according to First Street.

According to various reports, these are the key reasons US property prices are in peril:

1. Climate risk is causing insurance costs to soar and consumer preferences to change.
2. Insurance costs are accelerating ahead of home appreciation - insurance cost has risen to more than 20% of mortgage cost from 2013-2022.
3. Natural disaster costs of \$2.8 trillion since 1980 have disrupted growth in the three Sun Belt States of Texas, Florida and California.
4. Climate risks will continue to drain property values and stunt economies across US communities.
5. Risk-based insurance pricing could raise premiums by nearly 30% by 2055.
6. These large coastal metropolitan areas will see the highest insurance premium increases of 130-300+ per cent: Miami, Jacksonville, Tampa, New Orleans and Sacramento.
7. More than 55 million US citizens will relocate to areas of less climate risk by 2055.
8. By 2055, more than 70,000 US neighbourhoods will lose a total of nearly \$1.5 trillion in property value due to insurance costs and shifting consumer demand.

So ... how is climate change affecting the Canadian real estate and insurance markets? Probably worth a wee look-see.

Housing Market Can't Meet Needs of 2025 Buyers

(Newsweek/January 2025) "According to NerdWallet's 2025 Home Buyer Report, a rather ambitious number of Americans {15%} want to buy a home this year, even as nearly seven in 10 of the company's survey respondents feel the housing market has never been worse for buyers than now."

"NerdWallet's home and mortgage expert Holden Lewis told Newsweek." Fifteen percent of adults come out to around 39 million. In reality, fewer than 5 million new and existing homes will be bought this year.

Soaring home prices and nearly doubled mortgage rates have led to housing affordability dropping in every major metropolitan area of the country over the past five years, according to experts. Millions of Americans have been affected by the ongoing crisis, which became one of the most discussed issues in the country in the lead-up to the 2024 presidential election.

During his presidential campaign, [Donald Trump](#) vowed to increase inventory, lower mortgage rates, and make housing more affordable. However, experts fear that some of his policies, including mass deportations of migrants and tariffs on allied countries, might lead to [further home price increases](#) and keep many Americans off the property ladder."

Homebuilders Sound Alarm on Housing Market as Buyers Disappear

(Newsweek/February 2025) "Homebuilders are engaging with a "shock and awe" strategy on pricing and incentives in an attempt to attract buyers as a flood of new inventory reaches the Texas and Florida markets (...)" which they fear is making these states vulnerable to a housing market downturn. A majority of experts expect home price growth to slow down in the two states over the coming months, while some metropolitan areas [might report price declines](#).

On the other hand ...

Will a Recession Lower Home Prices?

(Newsweek/April 2025) "A recession this year could lead to a much-needed drop in home prices across the US but only because many aspiring buyers would be pushed to the sidelines by rising inflation and widespread uncertainty about their future.

The ongoing housing affordability crisis in the U.S., largely a result of a chronic lack of supply, skyrocketing home prices and historically high mortgage rates, was one of Americans' top concerns ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

The chances of the US economy entering a recession by the end of the year have increased since Trump introduced... tariffs."

"Should the US slide into a recession, mortgage rates could continue to fall and home prices could soften due to a drop in buyer demand."

As a consequence, home construction would also be pulled back. Further cooling the US housing market.

US Home Sale Cancellations Surge

(Giulia Carbonaro/Newsweek, April 2025) "Tens of thousands of pending home sales across the U.S. fell through in March... as growing economic uncertainty is leading many aspiring buyers to

double-guess whether they should be making such an important investment."

According to [Redfin](#) data, roughly 52,000 purchase agreements were canceled in March, the equivalent of 13.4 percent of homes that were sold that same month.

It is the third highest March level of canceled home sales dating back to 2017, when the real estate brokerage started recording the data, after March 2023 (13.7 percent), and March 2020 (16.4 percent).

The highest shares of pending home sales that fell through last month were recorded in the same parts of the country that experienced a housing boom during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Florida and Texas cities dominating a list of the top ten cities with the most cancellations."

You think that's bad. Trump's making it worse ...

New US Homes Will Cost \$11,000 More To Build Because of Trump, Body Warns

(Giulia Carbonaro/Newsweek, April 2025) "Trump campaigned on the promise of lowering housing costs and boosting inventory through deregulation and the mass deportation of migrants. However, experts have warned that his tariffs are likely to raise prices for Americans.

With the country still facing a housing affordability crisis, rising construction costs due to tariffs could discourage builders from embarking on new developments or force them to pass on price rises to buyers.

A total of 60 percent of builders reported that their suppliers had already increased the cost of materials or intended to raise prices due to Trump's tariffs, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI) survey released on Wednesday.

On average, homebuilders said their suppliers had increased prices by 6.3 percent, equating to increased construction costs of \$10,900 per home. This was up from an estimated increase of \$9,200, as reported in March."

Boomers Are Buying More Homes Than Any Other Generation

(Newsweek/April 2025) "Baby Boomers are not only dominating the U.S. housing market in terms of homeownership, but this year, they have also reclaimed the title of the [largest demographic of homebuyers](#), according to a new report.

The National Association of Realtors' (NAR) "2025 Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report" found that millennials have fallen significantly from the top position they held last year, which has now been regained by the older generation.

That is happening despite the fact that millennials—born between 1980 and 1998—are in a crucial time of their life during which they are likely to be settling in their careers, buying homes, and forming their own families.

The ongoing housing affordability crisis in the U.S. is likely to impact the younger generations of homebuyers harder than the older ones.

Boomers who already own a home are likely sitting on millions of dollars in equity, thanks to the recent rise in home values, and many are still holding on to lower mortgage payments.”

Study Finds Immigration Crackdown Could Slow Housing Market

US President Donald Trump’s plan for mass deportations of migrants could dramatically impact housing availability and affordability in the nation, according to this study led by University of Utah professor Troup Howard:

Cracking Down, Pricing Up: Housing Supply in the Wake of Mass Deportation

October 2024

Conclusion (edited)

“Housing supply in the United States has been starkly lower than average for most of the past two decades.”

“(Z)oning reform or streamlining, often touted as a necessary step for increasing housing supply, may not be sufficient: even if localities stand ready to build more homes.”

“(I)migration policy, along with other interventions that directly affect domestic labor supply, are important levers for policymakers interested in overall home affordability. In addition ... **the overall impact of increased immigration enforcement and deportation programs would be a reduction in housing supply and an increase in house prices ...**”

(There is a) Battle Against Property Tax Across US States

“The movement to drastically cut and even eliminate property taxes, which local governments heavily rely on to fund crucial public services, is gaining momentum in Republican-led states across the country.

Four states—including Florida, Illinois, Kansas and Pennsylvania—currently have plans to eliminate property taxes entirely. Others—including Texas and Montana—are trying to significantly reduce them.”

Florida is considering ditching property taxes to combat rapid house-price inflation

Property values in the state went up 27%, inflation adjusted, between 2020 and 2024.

Hey Fannie and Freddie, where will the mortgage money come from for US homebuyers?

Don’t ask us.

According to an April 7th article in Semafor “ President Donald Trump’s Federal Housing Finance Agency director is jettisoning executives and policies at breakneck speed, sparking chaos at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, as his ultimate goal remains elusive even to Republicans.”

FHFA chief Bill Pulte’s shake-up of the firms risks elevating housing costs at an already precarious economic moment — while privatizing the firms, as some Republicans desire, carries its own risks.

“This is the beginning of the road for Fannie and Freddie,” Mueller wrote. “Where the road leads is less certain.”

ELSEWHERE

Developments in other places

Markets in other countries are in *flux*. (Well, that’s one word for it.)

Britain

The share of spending on heating British homes lost through poor insulation is a reflection of the country’s aging housing. Almost 40% of the UK’s homes were built before 1946, compared with an EU average of 18%, making it some of the oldest housing stock globally. Improving insulation of UK homes could lower their energy consumption by as much as 40%, but the upfront costs are high.

Meanwhile, the UK finance minister recently announced a \$2.6 billion plan to build thousands of low-cost homes as prices soar. The problem is not just one of money: One obstacle, in Britain and elsewhere, is zoning laws which make building anything — whether houses or infrastructure — prohibitively difficult. A major new tunnel under the Thames has only just been greenlit, after 16 years of legal dispute and \$1.6 billion spent on permitting before construction could even begin.

Egypt

NZZ reported: **New Cairo, built to house 5 million inhabitants** stands largely empty. Egypt is the Arab world’s most populous



New Cairo: Top: Al-Fattah al-Aleem Mosque, Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ, Centre: Central Business District, Bottom: Green River Park, View of the Government District
By Abdelrhman 1990 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

country, and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi thinks a high birth rate has caused its longstanding economic problems: There are lots of young people and not enough jobs or space. The high fertility rate is driven by religious conservatism but also a weak pension system that means people need children to support them in old age. For 10 years, the government has been building 40 new cities, including a new capital outside Cairo. But so far, few people have moved to live there.

Ethiopia

The first female mayor of Addis Ababa (population 2+million) has sparked a national row over her plan to beautify the city. Adanech Abebe's administration is spending \$560 million demolishing and replacing the Ethiopian capital's shanty towns as part of the country's modernization push. But Abebe's plans have caused thousands of shanty town residents to be forcibly evicted to apartment blocks on the city's outskirts. Abebe is unrepentant, saying that everyone affected was compensated: "Addis Ababa means 'new flower'," she said, "and we need to make it live up to its name."

India

Business Today Desk
March 2025

'1 in 3 homes sold in Mumbai comes from redevelopment but at what cost...': Expert's reality check on real estate

"Mumbai's real estate landscape is undergoing a dramatic transformation, with "one in every three homes now being sold from a redevelopment project", according to financial advisor Akshat Shrivastava. But while these projects bring in new, taller structures, they also pose significant infrastructure challenges and drive up property prices.

Redevelopment in Mumbai follows a simple pattern: "old buildings are demolished, and new, taller structures replace them". This not only increases the supply of homes but also puts additional strain on the city's already burdened infrastructure.

Mumbai is running out of vacant land, making redevelopment the primary way to accommodate the city's growing housing needs. Older, dilapidated buildings are being demolished and replaced with high-rises. However, roads, drainage, and public transport struggle to keep up.

"If the city can't handle critical infra issues like water, garbage collection, traffic, etc., new taller buildings will bring in more infra pressure," Shrivastava pointed in a tweet.

Despite the increase in housing supply, prices are "not dropping" as one might expect in a traditional supply-demand scenario. Instead, "units in redeveloped projects are released in phases" and sold at significantly higher rates than older properties.

"Ideally, with new developments and more supply of homes, the prices should fall. But real estate does not work like that," Shrivastava explained.

Properties in these projects often command a premium—"as much as 1.5 times higher than older homes", making housing less affordable.

Despite the massive redevelopment projects, Mumbai remains one of the most expensive and unaffordable cities in India. "

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia's luxury real estate market sizzles as rich move in

Burgeoning wealth in Southeast Asia is driving demand for luxury residential property, reshaping the global market. The luxury property sector has long been dominated by the US, with the Gulf a fast-rising player. Yet last year Asia accounted for more than a fifth of all "branded residences," often in glitzy skyscrapers, with Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia the continent's biggest markets. Future years may see even more construction: One global real-estate company forecasts the ranks of Asia's wealthy to [expand more quickly than the Gulf's](#), while another property executive said the continent could rival North America over the next decade in overall activity.

Housing prices could be the deciding factor in Australia's upcoming election

(Yang Tian/BBC News, April 2025) The cost of buying a home has climbed 39% in five years — it takes the average person about 10 years just to save the deposit. Rents are also higher than before, while wages have not kept pace. Australia's population has grown rapidly, but there aren't enough homes to accommodate it, while planning laws make it hard to build in places people want to live, like Melbourne and Sydney. Both major parties have promised to build more houses, and the conservative Liberal-National Coalition has also promised to cut migration. Australia is not alone: Housing costs have outstripped inflation in much of the world, leading to widespread protests in European cities. 🌐



Michael O'Dwyer has had careers as a writer and editor – newspapers, magazines, radio, television, websites, marketing/advertising – and as a senior communications practitioner/manager/partner in both government and industry. His film/TV productions have won numerous international awards and have been shown on all major Canadian networks and on television and in theatres around the world.



The Floating Gardens of Xochimilco, Mexico.

By Leslie Savlov, Copy Editor of The Land Economist

Photos and videos by Benito Del Monte Medina

In a southern borough of Mexico City named [Xochimilco](#) you will find floating gardens that are called [chinampas](#). Chinampas are man-made islands that were built in a lake in pre-Hispanic times by the Xochimilcas people around the 14th century by “braiding reeds with stakes below the water’s surface to form underwater fences. These fences would accumulate soil and aquatic vegetation until the top soil appeared above the water’s surface giving the illusion of a floating garden”¹. The word chinampa has [Nahuatl](#) origins, and according to [Wikipedia](#) means “in the fence of reeds”.

The Xochimilcas, one of tribes that settled in the Mexico Valley basin were farmers and they created the chinampas to extend their agricultural land to grow crops.

At one time most of the land in the Mexico Valley basin was made up of five inter-connecting lakes with the largest being Lake Texcoco and also includes Lake Xochimilco. Most of this valley now forms the Mexico City area.

After the Spaniards conquered Mexico all the lakes but two were completely drained to control flooding and to increase the land area. Lake Xochimilco was one of the lakes that remained but due to the creation of the chinampas it was reduced to a series of canals.

Today there are approximately 5000 chinampas and the canal system covers 170 square kilometres.

In the centre of Xochimilco there are over 200 chinampas that cover an area of 1,800 hectares. The chinampas are used to grow crops and flowers.



¹ <https://www.thearchaeologist.org/blog/chinampas-the-ancient-aztec-floating-gardens-that-hold-promise-for-future-urban-agriculture>



Various plants and flowers grown on a chinampa

Flowers grown on these lands include non-indigenous varieties. They use vinyl canopies and side walls to protect the cultivations from wind, sun and cold weather.

Xochimilco has been designated as a UNESCO World heritage site.

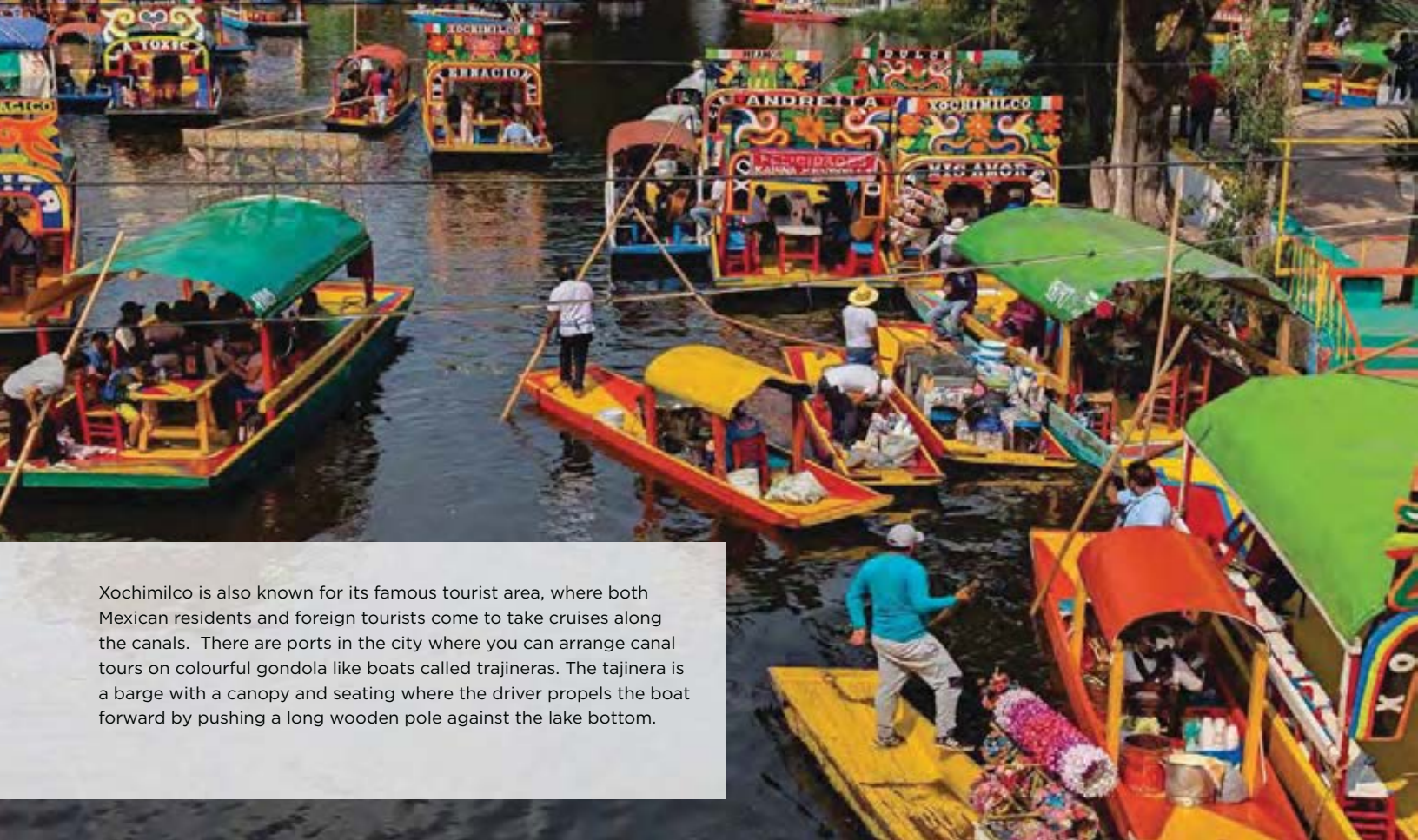
Some of the agricultural land has been converted by owners into housing, restaurants and rental facilities for parties and weddings.

However, not all the development of the land has been positive. There have been an increasing number of people illegally occupying lands including chinampas and building homes in ecologically sensitive areas causing pollution. Also some canals are being filled in illegally.

Currently there has been a growing conversion of even legally owned chinampas from farmland to residential use which is occurring once the land is passed down to the next generation. The children of farmers often prefer different professions and build homes on the chinampas.



Top and bottom left: Example of a chinampa whose use has changed from agricultural land to banquet rental facilities. Top and bottom right: Homes on a chinampa.



Xochimilco is also known for its famous tourist area, where both Mexican residents and foreign tourists come to take cruises along the canals. There are ports in the city where you can arrange canal tours on colourful gondola like boats called trajineras. The trajinera is a barge with a canopy and seating where the driver propels the boat forward by pushing a long wooden pole against the lake bottom.

Tourist Area.

The cruise will offer the tourist a truly cultural experience where you will see vendors in other boats pull alongside your trajinera to offer local crafts, clothing, flowers, and all types of food and drink. Among the vendors are those cooking corn on the cob on their boats and they offer them to you with Mexican toppings that typically include butter, mayonnaise, crumpled cortija cheese (similar to feta) and spices.



Corn on the Cob boat vendors

During your cruise you can buy beer, tequila and cocktails from the boat vendors. You can also find some stores and restaurants along the canal where you can ask you driver to dock at. There are also boats with musicians including mariachi bands that will offer to serenade you and you can hire them by the song.

Here are two short videos that will give you a taste of the sights and sounds of a canal boat tour.



Sights and Sounds
along the canal
Watch Video



Video of a Mariachi
band serenading on a
canal boat
Watch Video

Every year, usually in the winter my spouse and I go to Xochimilco to visit my in-laws who live in a residential neighbourhood beside the canal. Like most residents they have a small barge docked beside their home. The residents use the barges to transport furniture, equipment, food and people along the canal to and from their home. Often it is faster to transport objects along the canal than through city streets due to traffic. We remember helping our family move party supplies by boat to a garden that they rented for a family wedding.

My father-in-law often takes us on tours along the canal. We were there in March and he took us on a tour of both the residential and tourist areas. This is where many of the photos and videos included in this article were taken.

An interesting detail of our tour is navigating between different elevations of the canal. Travelling along the canal just before reaching the tourist area close to the port, the elevation on that side is significantly higher, and they have a boat lift to transport our barge up and over to the other side. We have included a video of our boat being transported by the lift.



Canal boat lift



Video of our barge being lifted during our tour
Watch Video

Not only is the elevation different, but if you travel to both areas you will notice a transition between the quiet residential section and the tourists section, with the latter full of activity, vendors, music and colourful boats. Both areas have their charms. In the quiet residential area you can focus on spotting the animal and plant life along the canal. You can see a wide variety of birds, water fowl, frogs, fish and an iconic animal to Xochimilco is the [Axolotl](#), a unique salamander that can regenerate lost body parts.

Unlike other amphibians this salamander doesn't go through metamorphosis but instead remains aquatic and gilled.



Aiolote de Xochimilco by Dqzvs2012 is licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)



Residential section of the canal



Residential section of the canal with barges that local residents refer to as canoas (canoes in English)

If you find yourself in Mexico City, I highly recommend that you visit Xochimilco and take a cruise along the canals. It will be a unique and colourful experience. On the weekends you will find many Mexican families and tourists alike taking cruises. Often local families celebrate birthdays and other special occasions by taking a cruise and having a picnic aboard the tajinera. 🐸



Leslie Savlov

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Canadian Sovereignty: The North and Using Airships to develop “Infrastructure of Significance” in order to disrupt/eliminate the “51st State” Conversation.

By, Commander Norm Normand, MBA, PCSC, CD.

The recent comments by Donald Trump regarding Canada becoming the 51st state are exacerbated by the fact that there is no single office of primary interest (OPI) for Canadian sovereignty. Sovereignty represents “supreme authority within a territory.”¹ For sovereignty to be exercised, two elements must be present: authority and territory. A state may perceive that it has authority over territory but can be said to exert sovereignty over that region only if it has uncontested authority over that territory. Currently, the Northern regions of Canada are unable to be surveilled (other than by satellite when available). This creates a sovereignty void. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) would seem to be the logical choice for a single OPI to help fill that void in the expression of Canadian Sovereignty but there are many other “fingers” in the Canadian “sovereignty pie”. A veritable alphabet soup of federal government departments have a stake in Canadian sovereignty, especially in the North. See below for a many of these federal government stakeholders:



Figure 1 – Federal Government Departments with a Stake in Canadian Sovereignty

This does not include the numerous provincial, territorial, indigenous, and municipal governments that all have a stake in maintaining Canadian Sovereignty, especially in Canada’s North.

As for the CAF’s role in maintaining Canadian sovereignty is concerned, there are some fairly wide gaps. This was demonstrated in 2023 with the Chinese spy balloon that flew through Canadian airspace and was only detected after it crossed into the continental United States from British Columbia and was subsequently shot down by the Americans. This balloon had travelled undetected through Alaska, the Yukon, and most of British Columbia before

¹ Zalta, 2020.

finally being detected near the BC/USA border.² It followed the path detailed in the figure below:



Figure 2 – Jan 2023 Chinese Spy Balloon Path³

The reason cited by MGen Paul Prevost (Director of Staff, Strategic Joint Staff) for the late detection of this balloon that had travelled thousands of kilometres over both American and Canadian territory, was that: “there was no “infrastructure of significance” along the balloon’s flight path”⁴

Although the infrastructure in Canada’s north is limited, an investment in airships that would regularly conduct sustainment activities in the shared Canadian and American Northern regions could be leveraged to detect foreign incursions into our airspace; it could be used to deliver cargo, improving the Quality of Life (QoL) for local populations; and it could also provide a deployable expeditionary Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) capability. HA/DR events will likely only increase in frequency as climate change progresses.

Interest from the mining industry has also been generated in leveraging existing airship transportation infrastructure to unlock parts of the resource-rich Canadian wilderness that contain minerals that have been deemed critical to decarbonizing Canada’s economy⁵. In a recent trade publication published by The Association of Ontario Land Economists, it’s been noted that:

“[w]hen the mining industry adopts a hydrogen airship model of operations, they will be able to access the most valuable minerals wherever they are in the most environmentally sound way. Most of environmental disruption of mining operations is caused by roads which will no longer be needed.”⁶

2 D’Andrea, 2023.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Canada. Critical Minerals Centre of Excellence

Mining operations in areas where no roads currently exist would be a good way to start developing “infrastructure of significance” in the area.

I and my colleague, Dr. Barry Prentice have written extensively on a concept for a circuit of airships that could transit Canada’s Northernmost regions.⁷ In a conference paper presented at the Canadian Transportation Research Forum, we point out that one airship, based out of Hay River, could effectively transit the entire Arctic region over a 24-hour period - see figure 3 below.

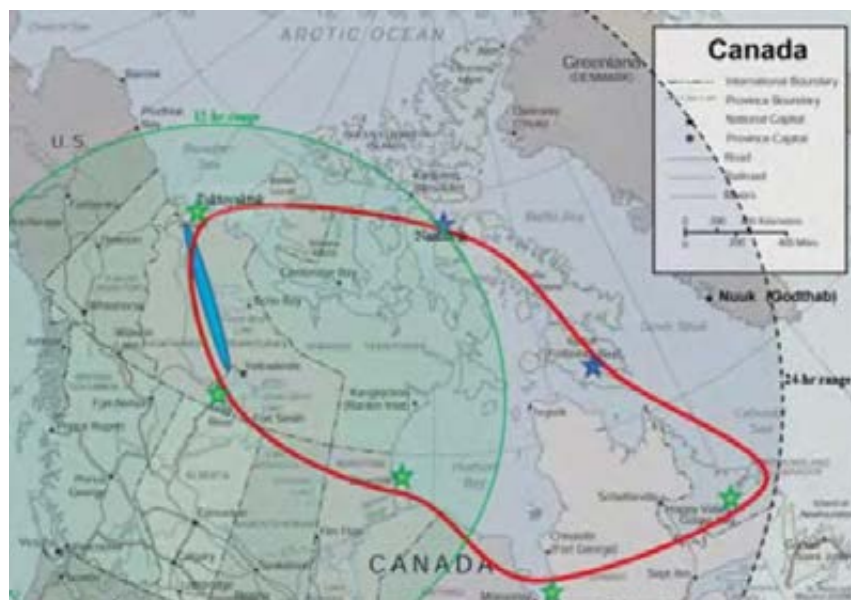


Figure 3 – Potential Airship Reach Within 12/24hrs from Hay River – One Airship⁸

6 O’Dwyer, 2024.

7 Prentice and Normand, 2024, p66.

8 Statistics Canada, The Canadian Transportation System (Ottawa: Transportation Data and Information Hub, 2018).

The situation when a second airship is added based out of Moosonee and a third is added operating out of Iqaluit is seen in Figure 4 below:

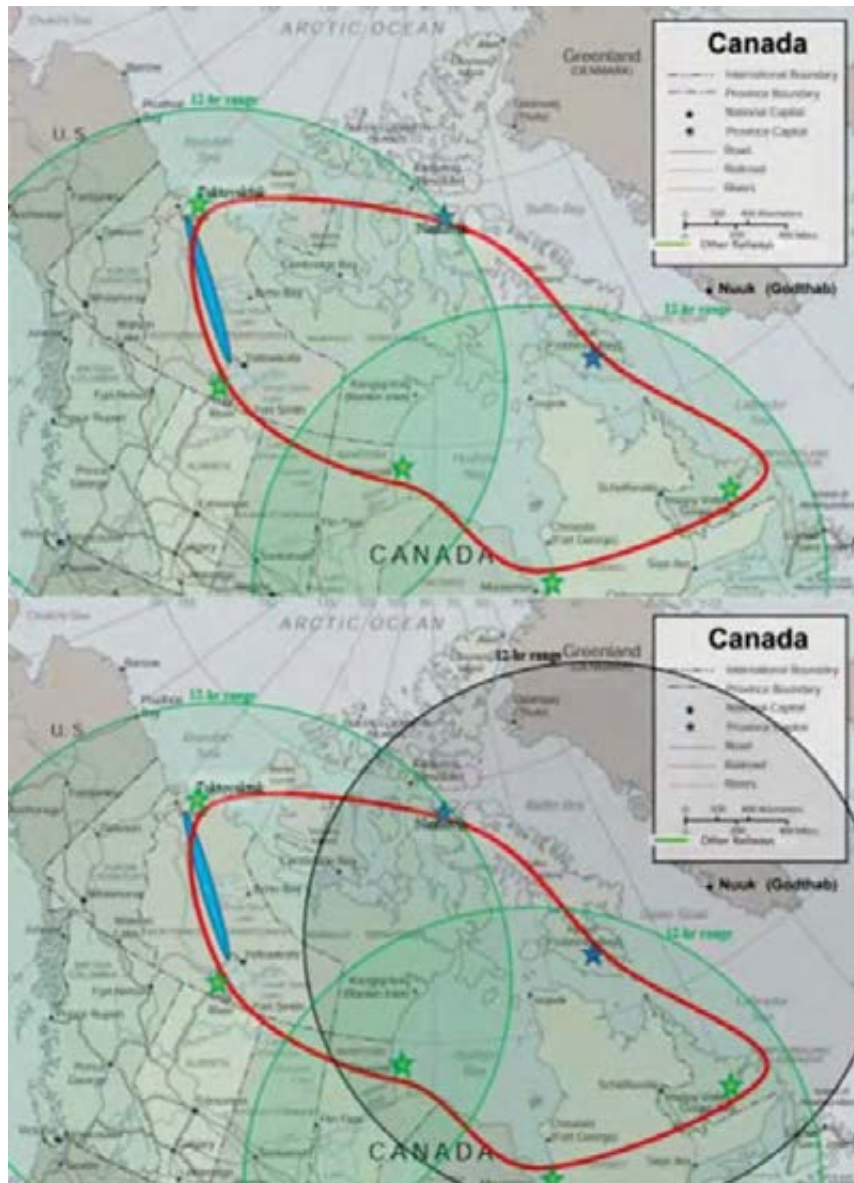


Figure 4 - Potential Airship Reach Within 12hrs with two/three Airships ⁹

Having three airships transiting the region significantly improves the visibility of the Northernmost regions of Canada. When there is no demand for cargo shipping, the three airships could effectively patrol the region and, if equipped with similar sensors as are currently used on the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) CP-140 Aurora - Maritime Patrol Aircraft, the gap in our Northernmost regions where there is "no infrastructure of significance" suddenly becomes smaller and transiting vehicles (sea or air) would become much more visible to the Canadian Armed Forces and its allies.

⁹ Prentice and Normand, 2023.

¹⁰ D'Andrea, 2023.

¹¹ Ibrahim, 2024.

¹² Zalta, 2020.

In order to take responsibility and exert sovereignty over its Northern regions, the Canadian Government needs to start investing in this technology. The circuit proposed in this article could effectively dissuade other national entities from conducting activities in our region that we're not aware of. Chinese and Russian interest in the region is already increasing which is raising tensions in the Arctic region. A circuit of between one and three airships used to deliver cargo for CAF operations and to communities in the area could be employed in a multi-role capacity to also conduct surveillance and increase visibility. Ultimately sovereignty represents "supreme authority within a territory." For sovereignty to be exercised, two elements must be present: authority and territory. This becomes particularly pertinent to Canada's claim of sovereignty over the Arctic. If the Canadian government is unable (or less able) to exercise authority over the activities in the region than another party, it no longer can claim to have sovereignty over that region. As discussed in this paper, Airships could help in the expression of Canadian sovereignty which could disrupt or even terminate any future discussions about it becoming the 51st state. Not only that, but this investment could go a long way to improving the quality of life of local inhabitants by reducing the cost of living as well as opening up the vast mineral wealth that Canada has to the rest of the world.

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Commander Norm Normand, MBA, PCSC, CD

Cdr. Normand is an active-duty Naval Logistician for the Royal Canadian Navy. He has written extensively on the use of airships to logistically connect the northernmost regions of Canada to the rest of the country in order to exert sovereignty, increase living standards, and unlock Canada's stranded mineral wealth. He is currently working with Defence Research and Development Canada to produce an "IDEaS" (Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security) challenge to industry that seeks to achieve these aims.



The Essential Role of Land Surveyors in the Gordie Howe International Bridge Project

By Christopher Oyler, B.Sc. Eng., O.L.S.

All photos were taken at the Gordie Howe International Bridge site courtesy of Christopher Oyler, B.Sc. Eng., O.L.S., Surveyors On Site.

Land surveyors play a crucial role in large infrastructure projects like the [Gordie Howe International Bridge](#) (GHIB) by providing precise measurements, mapping, and data analysis. Their work ensures the project adheres to design specifications and regulatory standards, minimizing risks. A reliable control point network (reference coordinates used for accurate positioning) acts as an insurance policy for project owners, ensuring efficiency and precision throughout construction.

Establishing a Long-Term Control Network

For the GHIB, the establishment of a robust control point network delivers long-term benefits that extend beyond the initial public works phase, supporting construction and post-construction monitoring.

Pre-Construction Surveying

Before construction begins, surveyors conduct topographical surveys to assess land features, elevations, and boundaries. This data enables engineers to design the bridge in harmony with the landscape while ensuring compliance with legal and environmental regulations. Surveyors also identify environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands or water bodies that must be preserved during construction. Additionally, they define property lines and clarify land ownership to prevent encroachment on restricted areas.





Advanced Surveying Technology

Surveyors utilized cutting-edge technology, including [Leica robotic total stations](#), [network real-time kinematics](#) (RTK) [GPS](#), and [Leica digital leveling equipment](#). To ensure accuracy, all data was processed and adjusted using MicroSurvey's STAR*NET software. On any given day, approximately 150 control points were maintained across the 250-acre site, with adjustments made as excavation and construction evolved.

The Role of Redundancy in Land Surveying

Redundancy was a critical factor in ensuring accuracy throughout the surveying process. By taking repeated measurements, averaging data, and using independent checks, surveyors mitigated errors caused by tool limitations, environmental factors, or human perception. Measuring points from multiple locations and using different methods helped identify and correct inconsistencies.

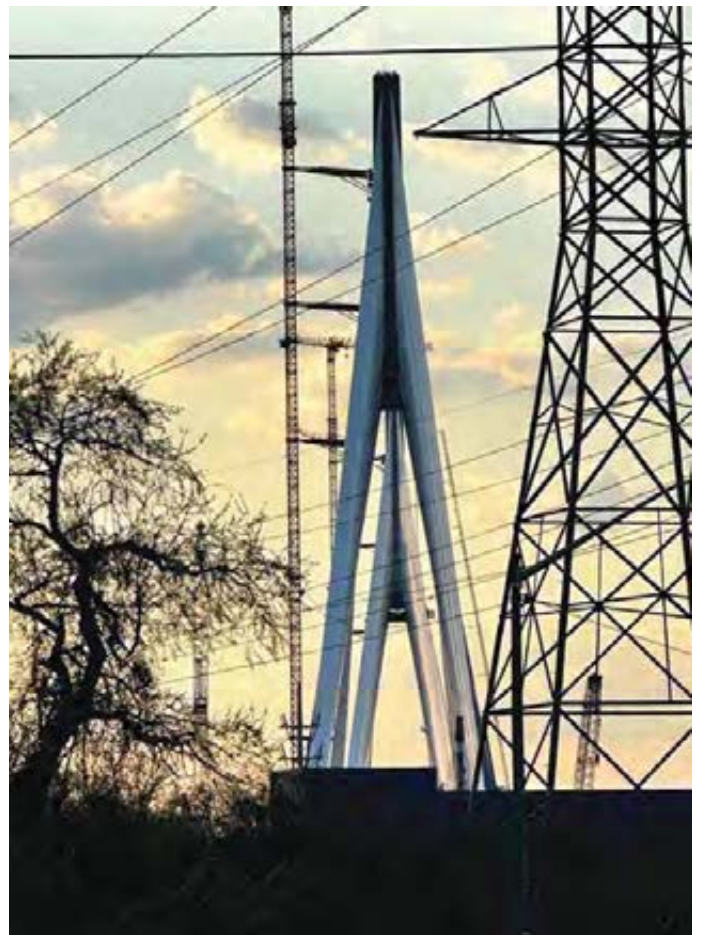
This redundancy allowed surveyors to efficiently reestablish control points destroyed by construction, maintaining the accuracy of the control network.

Monitoring and Control During Construction

Throughout construction, surveyors provided real-time feedback to ensure that structures met horizontal and vertical specifications. They also monitored material tolerances, such as concrete and steel, to confirm compliance with design requirements.



At the Canadian port of entry, one of the first surveying tasks involved relocating and installing over 4.3 kilometers of natural gas pipeline, constructing a 4-kilometer perimeter access road, and installing new utilities, including water, sewer, fiber optic, and transmission lines. A control survey of the 130-acre site provided the foundation for all subsequent construction activities. As the project progressed, surveyors continuously replaced or relocated control points disturbed by equipment movement or structural components.





Maintaining the Control Network

The control network was managed using [MicroSurvey's STAR*NET](#) software, which processed over 1,300 [GNSS](#) (Global Navigation Satellite System) and terrestrial observations, 1,497 point-to-point distances, and 4,700 independent measurements. This software allowed surveyors to adjust instrument settings, assess data quality, and refine coordinates for use by contractors on-site. Specific controls were established for bridge layout, ensuring precise alignment.

Ensuring Bridge Alignment

For a complex, cross-border project like the GHIB, surveyors played a key role in ensuring the exact alignment of the bridge span between Canada and the U.S. This required accounting for factors such as Earth's curvature and compliance with local regulations.

Post-Construction Surveying

Once the bridge is completed, surveyors will conduct as-built surveys to verify that the structure matches design specifications, ensuring its integrity and safety. Long-term monitoring will help detect settlement or structural shifts over time, which is crucial for ongoing maintenance.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge Project

Scheduled for completion in 2025, the Gordie Howe International Bridge will connect Windsor, Ontario, to Detroit, Michigan. Spanning 2.5 kilometers (1.6 miles), it will feature the longest cable-stayed main span in North America at 853 meters (2,799 feet). The bridge will accommodate six lanes of traffic and two pedestrian paths.

Establishing the control network for this massive infrastructure project—spanning an international border and a major river, was a significant undertaking. Coordination among numerous subcontractors involved in road building, utility installation, and earthmoving was essential to its success. 🔄

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PROVINCE OF ONTARIO ASSESSMENT FOR PROPERTY TAX PURPOSES

By John T. Glen, MA AACI FRICS MIMA

Until the Covid-19 Epidemic, the Province of Ontario had reassessments for property tax purposes on a four-year cycle. Ontario's last property assessment was in 2016. Understandably Covid-19 caused a postponement of the scheduled update of January 2016 Current Values, but the delay has now lasted 9 years and there is no date set for the next one.

Potential impacts of reassessment were mitigated by a 4-year phase-in of current values along with other policies designed to recognize impacts on small versus large commercial properties potentially impacted by changes in value over time. The longer period between reassessments means that value changes may be greater than would be mitigated by a 4-year current value phase-in.

What's MPAC

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is the body that assesses every single property in Ontario.

MPAC has a really good idea of what those updated values could look like because it has kept abreast of market conditions, sales data and more.

It says its database includes information about every last property in Ontario — some **5.5 million** of them. Those include all kinds of properties in local markets that can have very different conditions

Based on what happened to the real estate market since 2016 and the effects caused by COVID 19 today's real estate market has developed some new trends

Real Estate Market Trends Since 2016

Office buildings have been affected by the hybrid-work model. Office users have re-evaluated their office space requirements leading an office market vacancy surge

Logistics space demand has soared as eCommerce has increased significantly.

Retail has been affected both by eCommerce and changing consumer demands. Canada has seen the closure of Lowes and Nordstrom and now Hudson's Bay is liquidating all their retail stores.

Residential property values increased with low interest rates during COVID only to decrease when interest rates increased from early 2022. The recent decreases in the Bank of Canada rate have yet to stimulate the residential market greatly.

The Condominium market has developed a glut of small units as investors have experienced high interest rates and a decline in demand as municipalities have tightened licensing rules for short term- rentals.

MPAC Capabilities

In a Virtual Symposium¹ held on January 28 and 29, 2025 MPAC and other valuation agencies outlined their mass appraisal capabilities based on AVMs (Automated Valuation Models) and other technologies such as artificial intelligence

Presented by the Institute of Municipal Assessors (IMA) and the International Property Tax Institute (IPTI), this virtual symposium spanned two half-day sessions, and offered a deep dive into the future of property valuations. Featuring expert-led discussions, the event explored how emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning are transforming the valuation industry. Participants gained insight into the evolving role of these innovations and their potential impact on valuation professionals worldwide, positioning them at the forefront of a rapidly changing landscape.

Representatives of MPAC presented information on valuation models that can value residential, non-residential and farm properties based on the availability of "big-data" and transactional information such as sales, rents and costs as required.

¹ Embracing Global Innovation – Impact on Valuation Professionals IPTI/IMA, Virtual Symposium January 28-29 2025.

Reassessment Value Impacts

GTA Residential Example

If a reassessment was based on a January 2025 base, the following residential value increases would be seen in the Greater Toronto Area

	Average Price		
Dec-24	416	905	Total
Detached	\$1,624,500	\$1,336,718	\$1,399,209
Semi-Detached	\$1,302,024	\$953,776	\$1,088,543
Townhouse	\$900,503	\$913,460	\$910,761
Condo Apt	\$719,774	\$616,941	\$681,855

	Average Price		
Dec-15	416	905	Total
Detached	\$1,039,638	\$747,229	\$825,470
Semi-Detached	\$743,738	\$495,551	\$577,760
Townhouse	\$535,283	\$451,971	\$474,588
Condo Apt	\$400,088	\$325,036	\$378,249

	Percentage Change		
Dec 15 to Dec 24	416	905	Total
Detached	156%	179%	170%
Semi-Detached	175%	192%	188%
Townhouse	168%	202%	192%
Condo Apt	180%	190%	180%

Source TREB Market Watch December 2015 and December 2024

Note that there would be both a **Locational** impact (416) versus (905) and a **Residential Class** difference based on the TREB Average Market Prices for December 2015 and December 2024:

- Detached
- Semi-Detached
- Townhouse
- Condo Apartment

The above value changes would be complicated by the fact that MPAC uses shoulder years in their valuations so that sales utilized for the 2016 Current Value included those from 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Also, MPAC values all of Ontario so that other Ontario municipalities would all be affected differently.



AI created ImageGTHA

A CBC.News² report provided other estimates of overall value differences which might be expected as follows:

Residential	94%
Multi-Residential	104%
Farms	128%
Industrial	182%

Tax Impacts

By law in Ontario, the system is revenue neutral. Municipalities won't suddenly see a windfall after a provincewide reassessment.

Properties go up by an average, and if every property went up exactly the average, no one would see any change. They would keep paying their same share of the overall tax a city needs to collect.

But if you live in an area where your property increases by more than the average, you'll pay more tax. If your place goes up by less than the average, expect to pay less.

Tax Classes

Ontario mandates the following Tax Classes and municipalities can levy different tax rates for each class

- Residential
- Multi-Residential
- New Multi-Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Farms
- Managed Forests
- Pipelines

2 Kate Porter (2024) Ontario Property Assessments Have Been Paused for Years, and Who Knows When They'll Resume September 3, 2024

Ontario also mandates that there are upper limits to the various tax classes relative to residential. For example, the Farm Tax rate must be 25% of the Residential Tax Rate.

As an example Toronto had the following tax rates in 2024

Toronto Tax Rates 2024				
Description	City Tax Rate	Education Tax Rate	City Building Fund	Total Tax Rate
Residential	0.554586%	0.153000%	0.007703%	0.715289%
Multi-Residential	1.004080%	0.153000%	0.005398%	1.162478%
New Multi-Residential	0.554586%	0.153000%	0.007703%	0.715289%
Commercial	1.339053%	0.880000%	0.009624%	2.228677%
Industrial	1.386700%	0.880000%	0.019256%	2.285956%
Pipelines	1.066705%	0.880000%	0.014815%	1.961520%
Farmlands	0.138647%	0.038250%	0.001926%	0.178823%
Managed Forests	0.138647%	0.038250%	0.001926%	0.178823%

Reassessment Impacts

The Province of Ontario mandates a 4-year phase in of current values after a reassessment. When reassessments were conducted every four years such phasing made sense, but with an eight year gap the impacts would be considerably greater.

For example a 4-year phase-in of the GTA Residential Value increases previously summarized above would have the following impacts:

GTA Residential 4-Year Phase In			
	4-Year Phase Percentage Change		
Dec 15 to Dec 24	416	905	Total
Detached	39%	45%	42%
Semi-Detached	44%	48%	47%
Townhouse	42%	51%	48%
Condo Apt	45%	47%	45%

The above annual increase in current assessments would be shocking to say the least.

An alternative would be an 8-year phase-on as follows:

GTA 8-Year Phase-In			
	8-Year Phase Percentage Change		
Dec 15 to Dec 24	416	905	Total
Detached	20%	22%	21%
Semi-Detached	22%	24%	24%
Townhouse	21%	25%	24%
Condo Apt	22%	24%	23%

The result on an annual basis is still considerable!

What to Expect

Now that the Provincial election is over, the Government of Ontario should be able to make a decision on reassessment. However, with the imposition of 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum, as well as other potential tariffs we would expect any decisions on reassessment to be affected by other factors at this time. ➡

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John is a well known international lecturer who has specialized in valuation and property tax consulting relative to retail, office, shopping centres, hospitality properties, multi-residential, recreation and industrial facilities. He has worked in the Public Sector for Municipal & Provincial governments to assist in the development of and implementation of mass appraisal procedures for Ontario, Alberta and New Brunswick.

Rhythms of Change: Reflections on the Regent Park Revitalization

by Mitchell Cohen; 2024

published by Friesen Press, Manitoba

Book Review by Dr. Jim Ward

Since I was employed for several years in the 1980s as the Executive Director of [Dixon Hall](#), a key local community agency working with residents of [Regent Park](#), and in the 1990s as a research consultant, conducting studies on Regent Park community and policing issues, I was particularly interested in reading this book.

Rhythms of Change is an ambitious and highly readable account of the Regent Park Revitalization project as it completes its eighteenth year. The author, [Mitchell Cohen](#), is the CEO of the Toronto-based real estate developer, [The Daniels Corporation](#) which, on their second attempt to be the successful bidder on the [Regent Park redevelopment project](#) secured the contract up to the completion of three of the proposed five phases. Although they also bid on the contract to complete phases four and five, they were outbid by a competing developer, [Tridel](#).

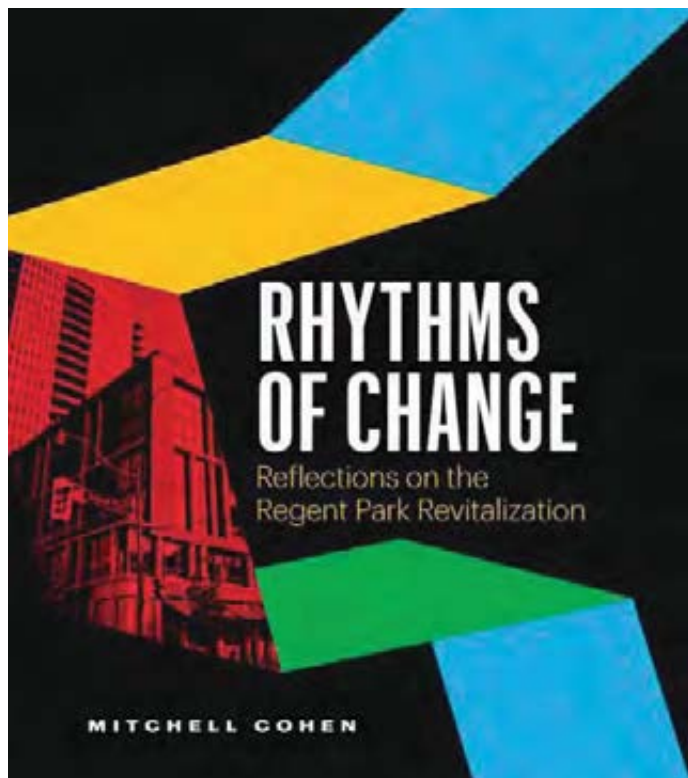
The book uses several approaches to describe what was an outstanding adventure in revitalizing one of Toronto's most troubled neighbourhoods. Regent Park was created in the 1940s as a much-needed response to the desperate living conditions of low-income people in Toronto's downtown east and, physically, it did improve living conditions for its early residents. However, largely because it was built on the Garden City model (i.e.) allowing relatively little traffic from elsewhere in the surrounding city, it became a somewhat isolated neighbourhood of low-income public housing renters and a troublesome housing site in terms of high crime levels.

The key aspects of Daniels' winning proposal were initiatives and building location strategies that would lead to improved connections with the rest of the city and considerable community-building opportunities for housing owners and renters, i.e. cross-class linkages. A key quote at the beginning of the book, actually taken from an email Mitchell Cohen sent to an American authority (the Director of the National Initiative on Mixed Income Communities) who visited the project in 2016, is as follows:

"...the real measure of success would not be the quality of the new homes, but rather whether an inclusive social fabric could be woven in which tenants and owners feel at home with each other and in their community, sharing the physical, cultural and economic benefits being generated by the revitalization."

The book uses three different formats to get its story across: Verses, i.e. Chapters; Bridges, i.e. linkages; Solo, i.e. short biographical pieces about key players in the process. By using this structure in telling his story, Cohen is able to demonstrate how inclusive their project has been. This is most obvious in the Solo pieces, where key bureaucrats, current and long-term residents and even musical compositions are featured. In this last example the author demonstrates how music is a key factor in bringing a wide range of people together. Cohen is himself a musician and musical composer and, together with others he produces and performs a musical about the revitalization project.¹

¹ A key aspect of the book is Cohen's sharing of his personal story. Early in the book, Verse2, comprises a short autobiography taking us from Cohen's birthplace in Regina, through various world travels and eventually involvement in low-income housing issues. In an important sense, the book is a combination of the author's biography and the Regent Park Revitalization experience. In many ways, this combination makes the book much more powerful than a simple academic account of the Revitalization of Regent Park.



An early Solo piece is on Derek Ballantyne, the first appointed CEO of Toronto Community Housing (TCH), the main public sector participant in the private/public partnership on the Regent Park project. Ballantyne is described as a highly effective leader of TCH. He is depicted as playing a key role in making the agreed “right of return” work for Regent Park residents who were unhoused by the demolitions through enabling three nearby offsite building to be constructed. Cohen writes:

“This was a master stroke in municipal finance planning. The offsite buildings allowed kids to remain in their schools and parents to maintain their social, health and religious networks.”

Considerable effort is expended by the Daniels team in working closely with the Regent Park community, through public meetings, one-on-one discussions with individual residents and community workers from nearby social agencies such as Dixon Hall, [Central Neighbourhood House](#), the [Christian Resource Center](#) and with City Hall staff and TCH. These discussions and consultations led to the development of the [Regent Park Social Development Plan](#). And, for the author, this changed Regent Park from simply a place to drive through, along Dundas Street, on his way to work, to responding to an [RFP](#) indicating that The Daniels Corporation wished to bid on the Revitalization Project. Although their first bid failed a second bid was successful

Once Daniels succeeded in winning the contract to begin work on the revitalization project, they went in there with substantial energy and a key contact was made with the [Toronto Centre of Learning and Development](#), an important local agency with the mission of building strong community connections throughout Regent Park. The agency worked closely with Daniels through the first three stages of the revitalization project. One of the most powerful Solo items in the book features Agazi Afewerki, a young

man whose family fled from a strife-torn Eritrea to Canada via Germany. Agazi worked closely with the Toronto Centre of Learning and Development to help create [Youth Empowering Parents](#). In 2010 Youth Empowering Parents won a United Nations Award. Such an event adds support to Cohen’s argument that the work he and Daniels carried out was as much, if not more, about helping to create strong community ties as it was about creating a rewarding built environment.

Early in the revitalization process, the Daniels team was invited to a meeting held by a number of several TCH staff and a large group of real estate consultants. They had two major suggestions: firstly, that the name Regent Park should be changed, since it had earned itself a highly negative reputation and secondly that the condominium sales office, i.e. The Presentation Centre, should be located offsite, perhaps near Dundas Square. The Daniels team rejected both suggestions. Cohen writes: “It was essential to say, ‘Hello, we’re here, and we’re part of your community.’” In fact, the Presentation Centre was built in the heart of Regent Park, at the Corner of Dundas and Regent Streets. Once up and running The Presentation Centre also acted as a community gathering location and continues to serve this function.

For Cohen there is much to celebrate in what he sees to have been a largely successful revitalization of Regent Park through the first three phases. (He does regret that Daniels did not win the contract for Phases 4 and 5.) He notes that sales got off to a great start in the first condominium building, 60% of them having been sold within a month of opening. And this appears to have set a pattern throughout the next 19 years. One of the approaches had been to sell suites to senior executives of Daniels and TCH. In fact, one of those buyers was Mitchell Cohen, who is now an established resident of Regent Park.

Key reasons for the project’s success, Cohen argues, include convincing decision makers in a number of banks, coffee shops (e.g. Tim Hortons) and Café ZUUZU to establish a location in Regent Park.² Daniels’ own Paint Box Bistro is an effective means for building on the need to provide attractive spaces for social mixing. The approach also involved considerable work in recruiting local community leaders to join the process and several of these are named, photographed and accompanied by short biographies in the SOLO format.

2 Prior to the Revitalization, there were no banks coffee shops or supermarkets in Regent Park

Cohen sees encouraging residents to work together in projects such as community gardening as an effective way of building community cohesion across, age, ethnic and class boundaries. In addition, Daniels had agreed with TCH that 10% of the workforce involved in the Revitalization project would be Regent Park residents, particularly in the areas of food and agriculture, sports and recreation and arts and culture. These areas are emphasized throughout the book as key to creating a sense of community.

In terms of arts and culture the musical *The Journey* is frequently referred to as a community building strategy. And, of course, the *Daniels Spectrum*, a multi-purpose entertainment and meeting location on Dundas Street, in the heart of Regent Park, is seen to be a highly successful example of a place for building a sense of common purpose among Regent Park residents. An obvious example of the success of this approach is the recognition by the UN of Regent Park as the site of an *Urban World Pavilion*.³

On several occasions Cohen discusses some of the obstacles that have challenged the success of the revitalization project: These included:

- The back-and-forth argument about whether or not the supermarket company Sobeys would locate a supermarket in Regent Park at Cole and Dundas. After much discussion Sobeys did open a location On Dundas Street under the name 'FRESHCO' with 'by Sobeys' below in smaller lettering.
- Whether or not the TCH/Daniels partnership would be extended through the Five Stages, i.e. to the completion of the entire Regent Park Revitalization process. Much to Mitchell Cohen's disappointment, it was not extended beyond the completion of Stage 3.
- In 2010 Rob Ford became the Mayor of the City of Toronto. Soon after taking up the office, he fired the whole TCH Board. Largely because a *Toronto Sun* article had accused several TCH executives, Toronto City Councillor Pam McConnell and Mitchell Cohen of buying up choice condominiums at 1 Cole at bargain prices. This argument was later disproved. But disruption continued. There were several different leaders hired and fired as the CEO of THC. When the RFP proposals were issued for the completion of Stages 4 and 5 the then TCH CEO refused to hire Daniels to do the work.
- Daniels had recommended that access to the newly created Athletic Grounds on Shuter Street and the Pam McConnell Aquatic Centre should be through local agencies such as Dixon Hall, in order to maintain the focus on benefits to those in the Regent Park community from these two new facilities. However, this request was refused by TCH. Access, i.e. booking time and space is done through Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation. So, there is a concern that Regent Park residents will become a minority of applicants for use of these two facilities.
- Pam McConnell, is possibly seen as one of the true heroes of the Regent Park Revitalization. However, one of her major demands was not heeded i.e. the location of a branch of the Toronto Public Library in Regent Park.⁴

³ Seen as a location where knowledge of effective examples of urban revitalization are shared.

⁴ For Mitchell Cohen there is little doubt that Pam McConnell was indeed the heroic force behind the Regent Park Revitalization process. In his Solo piece about her he writes: "Pam's vision for the revitalization was clear, and her passion to get it right ran deep. In short, there is no doubt that without Pam McConnell, there wouldn't be a Regent Park Vitalization."

This book is a fascinating look at what is important in making an urban revitalization process successful. The key learnings are: include the broadest range of people possible in the affected community; move towards total inclusion of all ages, all income and power levels; provide accessible opportunities for discussions, both formal and informal; get to know the local activists and local agency personnel; and, if possible, include the arts, music, eating opportunities, and simple fun.

Rhythms of Change provides a powerful argument that successful revitalization of urban residential communities is about much more than replacing old buildings with new ones. It is essential reading for anyone involved or interested in the process of urban renewal that leads towards improved urban environments. 🐦



Editor's Additions:

Video: Mitchell Cohen interview about *Rhythms of Change*
[Watch Video](#)

Rhythms of Change is available in Hard Cover at Indigo, Amazon and other retailers.

[Indigo](#)
[Amazon](#)



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INTRODUCING

Michael Real
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Bio contributed by Ian Ellingham

Michael Real has shown a long-term commitment to the concepts and practices of land economy, having joined AOLE over twenty years ago and contributed as a board member in the early part of this decade, during which he had a special interest in the on-line presence of the organisation.

Michael's formal education in real estate started at Ryerson in the architectural program. He soon realised that there were many other attractive opportunities in real estate, so completed his degree in project management, and later obtained a diploma in Real Property Administration from Seneca College. While pursuing his early career in Vancouver, courses taken in urban land economics at UBC further

focussed his interests. Returning to Ontario in the 1990s, he found the changes in the municipal taxation system to be challenging many organisations, and found himself at the leading edge of that change. Since then, he has continued to develop this special niche in the property universe, and has worked with such organisations as Colliers International, Altus Group, CREIT Management LP, and, since 2018, with Choice Properties REIT. Alongside his tax consulting, he has recently pursued his interest in the tax challenges facing commercial landlords, and was a co-founder of TenantShare, a software-oriented consultancy that automates and supports commercial landlords with the reconciliation, calculation and reporting of operating costs and taxes. He comments that he has also indulged in other aspects of real estate, but his expertise in tax matters is always in demand.

Of course, some people believe there is more to life than just real estate, and Michael enjoys curling, squash, and, when time permits, mountain climbing – he has taken on some serious peaks. He enjoys life in the village of Warkworth, north-east of Cobourg. With a population of about 1,000 the town is known as an arts centre, with a variety of fairs, festivals and tours occurring through the year. He is married and has three daughters.

What words of wisdom can he offer to emerging land economists? One is that involvement in property offers a wide range of interesting career possibilities, but sometimes you don't know exactly where it will go. Michael observes that many of the experienced managers he has worked with have pointed out the benefits of a well-rounded background – perhaps gained by starting with an arts degree.

AOLE Holiday Mixer

Good conversation, fun and comradery was had by all at our **AOLE Holiday Mixer** which was held on Dec 9th at the Craft Beer Market Toronto



Rosanna Bullock, Stefan Krzczunowicz



Philip Smith, Prakash Venkat



John Blackburn, Kari Norman, John Hughes



Robyn Brown, Philip Smith, John Blackburn



Philip Smith, John Hughes



John Blackburn, Peter McCallion



Peter McCallion, Bonnie Bowerman, Rosanna Bullock



Matthew Cory, John Hughes



Kari Norman



Matthew Cory, John Blackburn, Kari Norman, John Hughes



Philip Smith, John Hughes, Michael Cane



Stefan Krzczunowicz, Andy Manahan



NEWS BLASTS

Researched by **John Blackburn**, AIHM, PLE

Alex Nordstrom/Wikimedia Commons, License: CC-by-sa

MUST WATCH AOLE Speaker Series: What's Driving The Resilience Of Housing Starts

Webinar recorded on March 18 2025
Despite challenges such as high mortgage rates, rising construction costs, and an aging workforce, the multi-unit segment continues to exceed expectations. Learn how tight rental markets and government incentives are driving new developments, and explore the structural, policy, and market factors sustaining housing starts beyond traditional economic predictions.

Speaker: Kari Norman is an Economist with Desjardins Group, based in Toronto. The virtual event was moderated by Stefan Krzeczunowicz, Past President of The Association of Ontario Land Economists.

[Watch Video](#)

PMA | CIBC Summit - POLITICS, PLATFORMS, POLLS, (Federal Election & The Housing Industry)

Webinar recorded on April 25 2025
Speakers : Andrew Brethour , John Tory and Tim Hudak take a deep dive into the political platforms of each candidate and what that will mean for Canada's economy and housing industry. Their vast experience will help shed some light on what's at stake and what they think could change the game. Moderator: Chris Markovic

[Watch Video](#)

Desjardins Housing Outlook

What's Driving the Resilience of Housing Starts in the Face of Adverse Homebuilding Conditions?

[Read Report](#)

Federal Government Promises \$2.55B In Low-cost Loans To Help Toronto Build Rental Homes

[Read Article](#)

City Of Toronto Speeds Up Housing Permitting Process With Expanded Certified Plans Program

[Read Article](#)

Centre for Urban Research and Land Development (CUR) Articles: Movement Of People Within Ontario Stabilizing At Pre-Pandemic Levels Including Net Outflows From Toronto And Peel

[Read Article](#)

Evolution Of Provincial Policy Regarding Municipal Short-Term Land Supply Requirements

[Read Article](#)

Spectacular Population Growth Continued in The City of Toronto And Peel Region In 2024

[Read Article](#)

CUR Newsletter: November - February 2025- Research And News

[Read Newsletter](#)

Colliers Apartment Update 9 Multifamily Deal Killers in Ontario— and How to Avoid Them

Lessons from \$1B in closed sales and 300+ hours wasted on dead deals

[Read Article](#)

Threats Loom And The Best Time To Build May Be Right Now

[Read Article](#)

What Canadian Real Estate Lenders Have Their Eye On In 2025

[Read Article](#)

The Dorr Insider Report – April 2025 The Housing Crisis Has A simple Solution — And It Doesn't Involve Yet Another Government Program

Dorr's April report includes a summary of key aspects of insights from a recent article about the housing crisis written by Jon Love and published in the Financial Post. A link to the full article is also provided within the report.

[Read Report](#)

One Type Of Toronto Property Still In Hot Demand Amid Troubled Market

[Read Article](#)

Municipal World Daily Newsletter March 19 2024

Coverage of news from across Canadian municipalities.

[Read Newsletter](#)

10 Exciting GTA Developments Set To Complete In 2025

[Read Article](#)

Pinnacle One Yonge Tower On Track To Be Canada's First Building Over 100 Storeys

[Read Article](#)

Court Dismisses \$1.4B Bid From Mysterious Entity To Buy The One

[Read Article](#)

Devron's 101 Spadina Development Grows From 39 To 50 Storeys

[Read Article](#)

Manulife Proposes Five-Tower Development Near Yorkdale Mall

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Canada Lands Seeks More Units, Smaller Unit Sizes For 'Arbo Downsvew' Master Plan

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Toronto Office Tower To Be Torn Down After Almost 70 Years

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Huge Toronto Parking Garage Is Now Being Reduced To Rubble After Four Decades

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Toronto Shares Rare Glimpse Inside New \$128M Landmark Ahead Of Spring Opening

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Toronto Shuts Down Plan For Huge Condo Tower That Threatens End Of Local Bar

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Two 15-Storey Apartments Proposed Near Leaside LRT Station

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Concert Properties Completes Seniors Housing Divestiture, Securing \$334M

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Farewell, Doormat. Hello, Ownright: A New Era, Same Mission

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Metrolinx Wanted To Pay \$14 Million To Expropriate A Liberty Village Property For The Ontario Line. A Tribunal Ruled They Owed Millions More

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Self-repairing Buildings? Engineers Make Living Concrete In Construction Breakthrough

[Read Article](#)

Meet The Real Mark Carney

The Liberal leader has steered central banks and investment giants through successive crises, but guiding Canada through the Trump era would be the greatest test he's faced.

[Read Article](#)



John Blackburn, AIHM, PLE

President,

CRU Communications and Broadcast Productions Inc.

John has over 50 years' experience in marketing, sales and public relations, both in the E.U. and North America. Winner of numerous marketing and public relations awards, including BILD's Top Awards, two Grand SAMs, the very prestigious Riley Brethour Award, The Sales and Marketing Manager of the Year Award, the Canadian Home Builders' Association Award of Honour and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal, in recognition of contributions to Canada.



Association of
Ontario Land Economists

WHAT IS AOLE?
YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO OVER
\$50 BILLION
IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The Association of Ontario Land Economists (AOLE) is a membership based group of real estate professionals that offers the opportunity to connect with other professionals in related fields, share knowledge, learn and network with potential clients, partners, mentors and more. Currently the group proudly represents most of the significant developments in Southern Ontario and its members are active in many various roles across the vast real estate industries.

You can make a difference today by joining AOLE. Members have the benefit of broadening and enriching their professional development ensuring high-ethical work standards and making submissions to the government for improvements in both the law and public administration in relation to land economics. This year, our members will be involved in over \$50 billion dollars in Ontario real estate initiatives.

[Read about membership qualifications](#)

[Apply for Membership](#)

What careers are represented within AOLE? To get an idea of the professionals that are members of AOLE, we have compiled a list of some of the most strongly represented professionals.

If you need more information email us at admin@aole.org.



The Legislative Beat *Spring Update*

By Andy Manahan, PLE

Federal election:

The most pressing issue for all Canadians originated from the White House, with the continued threats by U.S. President Donald Trump to make Canada the 51st state and wreaking havoc with our economy through the indiscriminate imposition of tariffs. The market volatility has been referred to as Yo-Yo economics. Prior to Mark Carney being sworn in as Canada's Prime Minister in mid-March, Premier Doug Ford played an important role in pushing back on these threats by appearing on American media outlets such as [Fox News](#), by meeting with representatives of the Trump administration and [proposing retaliatory tariffs on electricity exports to the U.S.](#)

Carney's campaign got a boost when Ford invited him to an Etobicoke diner for a productive [meeting](#), with the requisite photo op. Meanwhile, relations with federal Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre never even made it to first base. In this [Politico story](#), Ford says that Poilievre only reached out to him for advice when polling made it clear that his campaign was faltering.

Following the general election win by the federal Liberals on April 28th, [Ford called on Carney to speed up regulatory approvals for resource, energy and other projects](#) to ensure that our economy is more resilient and self-reliant.

Provincial election:

On Feb. 27th the PCs achieved a third consecutive majority with 80 seats (down by two compared to the 2022 election results). The NDP retain official party status with 27 seats (down by four), the Liberals at 14 (up by five) and the Greens holding steady at two seats.

Ontario's first-past-the-post system and vote splitting continue to bedevil the Liberals and the NDP as these two parties garnered 29.9 per cent and 18.5 percent of the popular vote, respectively, while the Tories had 42.9 per cent. Former

Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie did not have a seat as leader over the past year and was targeted by the PC party in ad campaigns as "Carbon Tax Crombie." How much this campaign negatively affected the Liberal leader's prospects will be debated but it was damaging enough that she was unable to win in a Mississauga riding.

Protect Ontario:

Although Ford's reason for calling an election 16 months before the fixed election date of June 2026 was intended to 'Protect Ontario' from Trump's chaotic trade policies, it was unnecessary as the opposition leaders all said that the government would have support on addressing these threats. Polling clearly showed that the PCs would win a majority, but [Globe and Mail columnist Adam Radwanski opined that "Doug Ford should not, on paper, have been able to easily cruise to re-election"](#) considering the lack of progress on files such as health care, universities and colleges and housing.

It should be noted that there were many signals that Ford would be calling an early election, going back to last June. The PC brain trust was concerned that if Pierre Poilievre became Prime Minister prior to the fixed 2026 date, and if the federal Conservative party followed through on its policies to slash government spending, this would be problematic for Ontario's PCs.

The ongoing [investigation by the RCMP into Greenbelt dealings also factored into the early election call according to some observers](#). An opinion piece in the [Hamilton Spectator](#) reports on a perplexing move by the Ford government to scrub the Grade 9 geography curriculum so that there would be no mention of the Greenbelt or environmental concepts such as ecological footprints or decarbonization.

While Ford initially stated that the election was being called so that he had a strong mandate to address Trump, it was not until the near the end of the 29-day campaign

that this morphed into a new reason as enunciated by a Tory strategist: to receive a mandate from Ontarians that would ["match and outlast the president south of the border."](#)

Of course, Trump has toyed with the idea of being president for a third term [or having current vice president JD Vance running to become president in 2028 with Trump as VP](#) (perhaps this idea was taken from Vladimir Putin's playbook, with former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev as a figurehead, to overcome constitutional restrictions).

Made-in-Ontario/Canada priorities:

In response to the ongoing tariffs imposed by the U.S. government, Ontario introduced a new procurement policy to limit the ability of American companies to bid on public sector contracts. The speech from the throne in mid-April further outlined that Ontario would prioritize made-in-Ontario and made-in-Canada products such as steel, cement, forestry and other construction materials for government-funded infrastructure projects.

The big picture/tunnel vision:

An [opinion piece by Allan Gregg](#) is insightful as he wonders whether Ford will "revert to the old bombastic ways of his first six-and-a-half years in office" where we saw one-off initiatives such as getting rid of bike lanes, or whether there will be greatness and vision. Gregg added that the Premier's renewed call during the campaign to build a 60-kilometre tunnel under Hwy. 401 to be magical thinking. With challenges to Canada's economy, will Ontario even have the capital to build this project when there are so many other pressing priorities?

At around the same time that the final vote counting in the federal election was taking place, Ford announced that there would be a [feasibility study for the highway 401 tunnelling project](#). Other options such as

an elevated highway and more lanes would be part of the study. While “complementary congestion relief options” are part of the [RFP](#), using the excess capacity of the 407 is not included in the study parameters ([see Vol. 54, No.2](#)).

Electronic bids are to be submitted by May 29, 2025, with delivery of the report by February 2027.

New Cabinet remains bloated:

The Cabinet is largely the same as its pre-election makeup, with most of its high-profile ministers retaining their portfolios. A full list of the new Cabinet can be found [here](#) but it is worth noting that Paul Calandra, the minister who replaced Steve Clark at municipal affairs and housing, has now been moved to education. The new housing minister is Rob Flack.

Ford has continued with a large Cabinet of 37 members despite his commitment in 2018 to have a smaller Cabinet than his Liberal predecessors. In the first year, Ford had 21 members. Last year, when the number was increased to 37, the [Canadian Taxpayers Federation called this a bloated government](#).

It has been suggested that the larger Cabinet is one way to increase the salaries of more MPPs without having to alter the base salary which has been in place since 2007. [With an annual base salary of \\$116,550, the additional responsibilities of a parliamentary assistant or associate minister add a premium of \\$16,000 to \\$50,000](#). If Ford increased the salaries of MPPs, then he would be able to downsize the size of Cabinet and, arguably, be able to run a more efficient government.

Housing:

The housing crisis has not improved, and Ontario's per capita production is even lower than most other provinces. In 2024, only nine out of 50 municipalities met or exceeded [provincial housing targets](#).

Summarized in this Storey's piece, Queen's Park aims to standardize development study requirements across the province and develop a province-wide tool to accelerate land use planning and Building Code permit approvals. Ford also wants to work with 'housing-forward' municipalities, such as Vaughan and Mississauga, to lower development charges (DCs), including leveraging the existing [Building Faster Fund](#),

which rewards municipalities for meeting or exceeding housing targets.

Note: Vaughan reduced DCs by 47 per cent last November, with the new rates remaining in place for five years. Mississauga will reduce DCs by 50 per cent for new builds, and 100 per cent for three-bedroom units in purpose-built rental buildings where permits are pulled prior to Nov. 13, 2026.

A [report commissioned by BILD](#) shows that between 2011 and 2023, DCs have increased across the GTA by 176 per cent. A major recommendation by the consultant is to initiate legislative reform to reduce DC by-law appeals and thus speed up the process for building projects.

Over the years, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has expressed concern that DC reductions would not necessarily be passed along to new homebuyers. Further, if there is a DC funding gap then growth-related expenses would have to be covered by property taxes, with an unpalatable increase of 20 per cent on average across Ontario's municipal sector. AMO is both:

- (1) partnering with the Municipal Finance Officers Association to further study the impacts of the industry's proposals and to [offer ideas to promote housing affordability](#), and
- (2) jointly requesting with the Ontario Home Builders Association for Min. Flack to modernize the DC framework.

Another builder organization, [Rescon, has stressed the urgency of implementing these reforms as Ontario housing starts were down 38 per cent](#) in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2024.

As this can be classified as a 'wicked' social and economic problem, ramping up both provincial and federal funding to support the construction of municipal infrastructure must be high on the policy agenda.

In the “Protect Ontario” pre-election document (released only three days before voting day), the PCs committed to provide “\$2 billion more to help build millions of new homes, with \$1 billion in the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program and \$1 billion in the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund.” This would bring the total amount invested in these programs to more than \$4 billion over the last two years. Does this go far enough to make municipalities “whole” as a former provincial minister once promised?

While increasing housing supply is of paramount importance, [CUPE has weighed in by blaming the financialization of housing](#) as a major contributor to rising costs.

More red tape reduction:

In response to Trump's economic threats, energy and mines minister Stephen Lecce introduced Bill 5 on April 17: Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act. In an effort to reduce regulatory barriers to mining and development projects, 10 separate schedules are contained in the bill, some proposing minor adjustments to legislation, while others will result in entirely new regimes. For example, the Endangered Species Act would, if enacted, be replaced by a new Species Conservation Act. This has created consternation amongst environmental groups who have expressed concern that endangered species protections will be severely curtailed, for example, by having a limited definition of habitat. [Ecojustice lawyer Laura Bowman says that “the Ontario government is using the trade war as cover for its war on species.”](#)

A science-led process is also cast aside as Cabinet will be empowered to define terms such as “adverse effect” and “alternative habitat”. This [Narwhal article](#) underscores that “project proponents with proposals that could harm a species at risk will also be able to start work as soon as they complete an online registration process, rather than waiting for a permit from the Environment Ministry.”

Feedback on the proposed changes can be made through the environmental [registry](#) by May 17, 2025.

May 1, 2025 ➤



Andy Manahan is President of Manahan Consulting Services and a member of AOLE's Board of Directors



Association of
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What careers are represented within AOLE?

To get an idea of the professionals that are members of AOLE, we have compiled a list of some of the most strongly represented professionals below:

Architects

**Certified Property
Managers**

Economists

Lawyers

Land Use Planners

**Marketing
Consultants**

Financial Services

Mortgage
Brokers

**Municipal
Assessors**

Ontario Land
Surveyors

Engineers

Property
Tax Agents

Builders

**Quantity
Surveyors**

Real Estate
Brokers

**Real Estate
Appraisers**

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CLICK HERE

aole.org

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