



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City receives top spot for contributing to housing affordability

Barrie, ON – A new study released by the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) named the City of Barrie as the overall most efficient, helpful and cost-effective municipality across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) for getting new housing developments approved.

The Municipal Benchmarking Study, compiled by Altus Group, looked at several factors that may contribute to affordable housing issues in major housing markets across the GTA. The study compared 18 municipalities, and revealed that the costs, timelines, and processes associated with approving housing can have a significant impact on overall housing affordability.

“Keeping approval costs and timelines down makes it easier to get affordable housing built and fights high rents and housing prices, a key priority of Council,” said Mayor Jeff Lehman. “It also helps power our economy as we navigate COVID-19.”

The study ranked municipalities on factors contributing to housing affordability, like:

- Planning features – how easy it is to work with a municipality while moving through the approvals process, including level of transparency and availability of tools and resources
- Approvals timelines – the time it takes for different types of housing development projects to get approved and ready for construction
- Government charges – the amount of money a municipality will charge developers to build

The City is at the top of the list for the number of planning features – such as application tracking tools and development guides – that it provides as developers seek approval on a project. Barrie is also positioned as having one of the shortest timelines for approvals at an average of 12 months per project, all while offering an open and transparent decision-making process.

“It is rewarding to see our investment in streamlining processes and developing tools, along with our commitment to engaging with the community throughout the development process, be recognized,” said Michelle Banfield, Director of Development Services with the City of Barrie.

The Municipal Benchmarking Study also reveals that Barrie has had one of the highest jumps in new rental housing developments across the GTA, and highlights that while regions like Peel, Toronto and York are seeing young adults in the 25-44 age group move away to other parts of Ontario, the Simcoe region is seeing an increase of people from that age demographic moving to the area.

Read the full study at bildgta.ca.

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For more information, please contact:

Melanie Rumley
Senior Communications Advisor
705-627-2702
melanie.rumley@barrie.ca