

FINANCIAL POST

One Ontario initiative to standardize and streamline the development application approval process hits critical mass

Feb 01, 2021

TORONTO, Feb. 01, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — One Ontario, a collaborative research and development initiative, is ready to move forward on a program that will standardize and streamline the development application approval process. One Ontario was spearheaded in June 2020 by AECO Innovation Lab (AECO); since then, they have formed a coalition of key stakeholders with the goal of unifying data exchange to achieve efficiency and transparency throughout the development approvals process, and enable data aggregation for reporting and measurement in support of continuous improvement.

The compelling One Ontario story has gained traction across the province, and been covered extensively by relevant media. In recent weeks, the number of organizations supporting One Ontario has grown exponentially, with many more showing significant interest in joining the coalition in a leadership role as sponsors, or in a supporter role.

A coalition of more than 20 stakeholders

One Ontario is proudly sponsored by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), Ontario Building Officials Association (OBOA) and AECO Innovation Lab (AECO). These organizations have provided initial funding and significant resources to establish the initiative, and bring it to the point of critical mass.

There has been tremendous support for the One Ontario initiative from both the public and private sectors. In addition to the previously announced Toronto BIM Community (tBIMc), and Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), supporters now include:

- Large Municipalities Chief Building Officials (LMCBO)
- Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA)
- Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD)
- Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA)
- buildingSMART Canada (bSC)
- Association of Consulting Engineering Companies – Ontario (ACECO)
- Ontario Structural Wood Association (OSWA)
- Home Construction Regulatory Authority (HCRA)
- Tarion
- City of Toronto
- Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)
- City of Windsor
- Conservation Ontario
- Calytera

- Unisys
- Alphinat

Poised to transform the development application approval process

Municipalities are under pressure to digitize and be more efficient, and the government has stepped forward with programs to support these goals. However, the development approval process is complex, often requiring the involvement of multiple applicable law agencies and other organizations. Ontario needs a strategic approach to maximize efficiencies and break down data silos in order to harness the full benefits of an integrated province-wide approach that will optimize return on taxpayers' investment.

Based on research and international best practices, One Ontario recommends a holistic approach centered around consistent data exchange standards for applicants, municipalities and agencies. Consistent data standards will enable municipalities to leverage investments being made in digital review platforms, and to take advantage of the many digital solutions on the market today. Connecting the e-permitting systems vital to automating application submissions with the rest of the development approvals process will also set the stage for central review and aggregated data capabilities. Ultimately, this will enable key stakeholders to have transparency across the entire development approval process, and to leverage data to identify bottlenecks and enable continuous improvement.

In addition to achieving efficiency, transparency and data sharing throughout the process, the One Ontario approach will enable future resilience of our built infrastructure by providing a framework for implementation of other best practices such as establishing a BIM standard to enable code compliance checking and related applications.

An opportunity to lead the way

One Ontario is submitting proposals outlining the coalition's recommendations, and inviting the government and others to sponsor and support this initiative. "Ontario has the opportunity to take a leadership position and implement a strategic province-wide solution that serves as an example for the rest of Canada," says Arash Shahi, CEO of AECO. "The One Ontario solution supports and integrates with existing e-permitting systems at the municipal level, and will break down information and data silos, modernize legacy systems, and put data-driven decision making at the core of the government."

With development of a set of data exchange standards on the near horizon, now is the time for other interested stakeholders to join the coalition and show leadership by sponsoring this future-focused initiative. Visit OneOntario.ca for more information on the initiative and how to get involved, and follow One Ontario on LinkedIn for the latest updates.

About One Ontario

One Ontario is a collaborative initiative established by AECO Innovation Lab, with the aim of establishing a set of provincial guidelines for data and information exchange throughout the

development approval process. The framework will be aligned with regulatory requirements set by the province and will be driven by technological tools and advancements within the AEC industries. Learn more at oneontario.ca and at [linkedin.com/showcase/one-ontario](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/one-ontario).

About AECO Innovation Lab

AECO Innovation Lab leads digital transformation of architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industries and governments through collaborative R&D projects. We are dedicated to breaking down silos and increasing the productivity of the AEC sector by providing a hub for collaboration, knowledge sharing and digital transformation. AECO R&D projects unite the private, public and academic sectors by building coalitions to investigate AEC industry operating practices and develop optimization solutions.

For more information

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