

Construction jobs to soar in Toronto by 2031: Report

Toronto Region Board of Trade estimates 147,000 construction-related jobs will be available in GTA over next 15 years

The number of new residential dwellings required in the GTA region will likely exceed 800,000 units, the Toronto Region Board of Trade report says, worth \$230 billion in construction investment. (TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO)

By **LISA WRIGHT** Business Reporter

Tues., Oct. 4, 2016

Over the next 15 years, the Toronto area will need almost double the number of construction workers it currently has in order to accommodate new infrastructure projects along with an aging workforce, says a new report by the Toronto Region Board of Trade.

The study, to be released Tuesday, says the GTA will see an estimated jump of about 147,000 construction-related jobs – both part-time and full-time – by 2031 to work on everything from transit and roads to shopping centres, hospitals, schools and housing. There are currently about 175,000 construction-related jobs in the GTA.

For instance, the number of new residential dwellings required in the region will likely exceed 800,000 units, the report says, worth \$230 billion in construction investment.

Over the next 15 years, approximately 118,000 workers are needed for \$214 billion worth of planned construction activity, and another 29,000 workers are needed to replace those expected to retire.

“Truly, this is a generation of jobs,” said board president and CEO Janet De Silva.

“While job creation will flow broadly across the economy, it will create a huge demand for skilled and professional workers in the construction industry in particular,” the report says.

It estimates that over the next four years, the Toronto area will require about 9,000 new workers per year – with that number growing to 11,000 workers per year by 2028.

“To build tomorrow’s infrastructure, we must build a pipeline of talent today,” said De Silva.

“The business community knows that if we don’t pay attention to this issue, we run a real risk of not delivering our planned infrastructure on time and on budget,” she noted.

The board is calling on employers, policy makers and education providers to set up a task force to “connect the dots” to attract enough talent to tackle all the upcoming construction projects — including Metrolinx’s ambitious transit plans — in the coming years.

The demand is not just for general labourers but also carpenters, bricklayers, roofers, heavy equipment operators and truck drivers, civil engineers and gas fitters, to name a few. The board report lists positions needed in related fields such as administrative, finance and retail sales.

The study says that 62 per cent of the top 50 construction-related occupations the GTA needs would require some form of diploma, certificate or apprenticeship rather than an extensive university education.

It is “important to inform students and workers alike of the skills and education these occupations require,” says the “Building Infrastructure, Building Talent” document.

Jobs needed from 2017-2031

Labourers -- 16,964

Electricians -- 9,818

Plasterers and drywall installers -- 4,185

Bricklayers – 2,729

Financial auditors and accountants -- 1,175

Crane operators -- 601

Source: Toronto Region Board of Trade