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GREATER TORONTO & HAMILTON AREA

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NRU RECOGNIZES
THE TOP-10 GTHA
DEVELOPMENT LAW
FIRMS IN ITS 22ND
ANNUAL REVIEW.
SEE PAGE 6.

■ CONSTRUCTION TRADES FACE LABOUR DEFICIT IF ACTION NOT TAKEN

BUTTRESSING SKILLED LABOUR

Rob Jowett

Experts say more construction workers are needed to supply Ontario's labour force to help the economy recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that the industry has enough of a labour supply to meet the province's long-term development needs.

Since triggering widespread shutdowns in March, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the economy and on the construction industry especially. Business and municipal shutdowns have added significant pressure to already stretched local budgets and planned infrastructure projects have been deferred or cancelled to save money. Meanwhile, physical distancing requirements on construction sites have slowed down project completions significantly. A robust construction workforce will remain necessary across the GTHA in order to build the necessary housing needed to address the region's housing

affordability crisis and to complete major infrastructure projects such as the Ontario subway line and Hurontario LRT, and a continuing reduction of skilled workers in the workforce will make achieving these goals much more challenging. Finally, an increase in renovation projects during the pandemic by homeowners looking to use their time at home to enhance their properties is further straining the skilled trades workforce.

"We have lost nine per cent of our workforce since the pandemic started," **Canada's Building Trades Unions** executive director **Sean Strickland** told *NRU*. "I think a recession is likely in late 2021 if investment does not pick up... money in existing [construction and infrastructure] programs [that] has already been allocated and accounted for needs to start flowing and the provincial and federal governments need to sign these transfer payment agreements so the jobs can get

started [and more jobs can be preserved]."

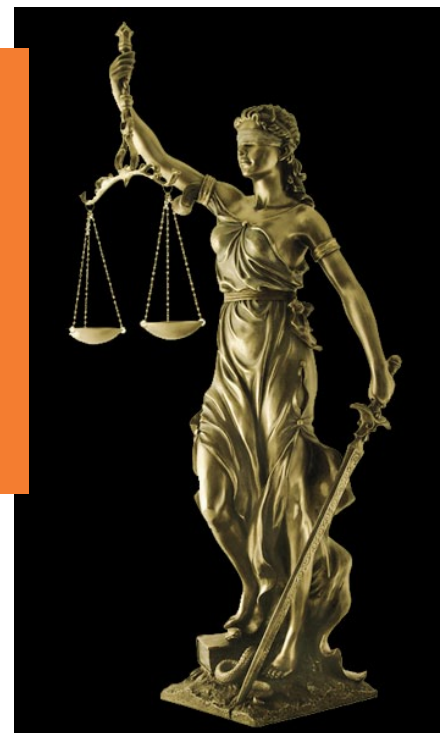
Strickland says the pandemic's effects on the skilled trades workforce are exacerbating long-standing challenges that have faced construction-related trades, especially around their ability to

attract new trainees to replace aging workers. He says the construction industry will need to play a vital part of Ontario's economic recovery from the pandemic and so governments, trades organizations, and other stakeholders should be

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Iustitia (Lady Justice) is a symbolic personification of the coercive power of a tribunal: a sword representing state authority, scales representing an objective standard and a blindfold indicating that justice should be impartial. See this year's Top-10 GTHA Development Law Firms, page 6.

SOURCE: DEVAL KULSHRESTHA



UPCOMING DATES

JANUARY

- 4 Ajax Community Affairs & Planning Committee, 7:00 p.m.
Clarington General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.
Pickering Planning & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.
- 11 Clarington Planning & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.
Hamilton Public Works Committee, 1:30 p.m.
King Council/Committee of the Whole, 6:00 p.m.
Mississauga Planning & Development Committee, 6:00 p.m.
Newmarket Committee of the Whole, 1:00 p.m.
Oshawa Development Services Committee, 1:30 p.m.
Scugog General Purpose & Administration Committee, 1:30 p.m.
Whitby Committee of the Whole, 7:00 p.m.
- 12 Hamilton Planning Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 13 Durham Region Committee of the Whole, 9:30 a.m.
Georgina Council, 9:00 a.m.
Halton Regional Council – Workshop/Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
Hamilton General Issues Committee, 9:30 a.m.
Mississauga General Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 14 Burlington Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee, 9:30 a.m.
Peel Regional Council, 9:30 a.m.
York Region Committee of the Whole, 9:00 a.m.



BUTTRESSING SKILLED LABOUR

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considering how best to retain and attract workers.

The pandemic has led to several issues for the construction labour force in addition to the decrease in construction projects, **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario** president **Richard Lyall** told *NRU*. Lyall says there are a lot of aging workers in the industry who are leaving it due to the slowdown in work and they are not being replaced quickly enough. Much of the construction industry relies on immigration to maintain its supply of skilled workers, especially for the hardest jobs that are not attractive to Canadian workers like laying concrete, and global travel shutdowns have significantly decreased the number of immigrant workers who are available.

A **BuildForce Canada** [report](#) released in February shows that Ontario will need to add around 100,000 more skilled trades workers by 2029. By that time, 86,300 existing

workers are expected to retire and only 78,900 new workers will join it, leaving a gap of 21,800.

Lyall says the pandemic-related challenges are compounding other longstanding issues the industry has faced like a lack of youth entering skilled trades and little diversity within the trades. He says there are process issues that make it harder for people to get certification for particular trades, that apprenticeship and union space allotments are insufficient for the number of workers needed in the field. Further, securing one of those spaces often requires knowing the right people to gain entry, as well as possessing the technical ability. Lyall also notes that the education system directs young people toward university and away from the trades generally. He adds that construction jobs are going to become much more technical in the future as the machinery becomes more advanced and that currently, the industry does not have enough workers with the

technical capabilities to operate all the new equipment, meaning new training programs and certifications will be necessary in the near future.

“Our training and apprenticeship system is antiquated... [and] there’s a major failing in our education system,” says Lyall. “We need to modernize it. We need to really pay attention to training people with skills that employers want because the world of work is changing... Within 20 years, probably one of the busiest jobs on a construction site is going to be maintenance repair technicians for the equipment of robots.”

A major challenge facing the construction labour supply from before the pandemic is restrictions on apprentices, **Ontario Chamber of Commerce** president and CEO **Rocco Rossi** told *NRU*. Rossi says that in particular, he wants to see reductions in apprenticeship ratios so that more people can train as apprentices. There are 33 skilled positions in Ontario that have prescribed apprenticeship ratios, which are currently set so that one journeyperson must be employed per apprentice. The provincial government reduced the ratio in 2018;

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BUTTRESSING SKILLED LABOUR

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trades previously had different ratios that required more journeypersons per apprentice.

“[A] doctor [can have] five interns with him that are learning, are becoming doctors, need to do their practical time,” says Rossi. “And yet in the plumbing at my home, there have to be four journey[persons] for every apprentice... it’s amazing to me that in dealing with my internal plumbing of a human being, I could have five apprentices, if you will, and yet for my toilet, heaven forbid that there be one.”

Rossi says the planned end to the **Ontario College of Trades**, which was announced by the provincial government when it reduced the apprenticeship ratio, is an important step towards increasing the construction workforce that allows the industry more hiring, certification, and regulatory flexibility, but that more needs to be done. He says that there needs to be alignment among provinces so that apprenticeship work done in one province can count toward the total number of hours needed for trade certification in another, whereas right now, any time spent as an apprentice outside Ontario generally would not be counted toward

certification in Ontario. Rossi adds that probably the largest challenge facing the industry is the stigma that exists in much of the education system around entering the skilled trades. Most high schools direct students away from the sector, recommending university instead.

While bringing more people into the workforce and making the training and certification processes easier are vital parts of ensuring the labour force remains strong, these measures won’t be enough to address the region’s immediate challenges, **Carpenter’s District Council of Ontario** president **Mike Yorke** told *NRU*. He says more skilled workers, especially those trained for new roles requiring advanced training not available to most people in Canada, will need to be drawn from other countries. He notes that this has been a particular challenge for concrete forming and that some job sites with more technical requirements have already had to bring people in temporarily from abroad. Yorke adds that the pandemic has exacerbated existing training challenges by limiting the number of people who can attend a training class in person or who can work on a jobsite.

“With COVID, we’ve gotten

down to about a third of our typical intake program at the College of Carpenters,” says Yorke. “We’ve gone from... [up to] 180 [students] on a regular day here—we’re probably down to 40, 50, or 60. Classes have gone from a max of [up to] 18 down to six. And then, we just don’t have the space [to train people].”

Strickland says that to retain more of the existing labour force, there needs to be more investment in construction projects, especially in infrastructure projects led by public investment. He says there are 18,000 infrastructure construction projects across the country that need to begin as soon as possible to keep people working and to continue investing in the economy. He adds that through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan, the federal government has already committed \$180-billion in infrastructure spending through 2027, and making that funding available now will be vital to supporting the construction industry.

“Once the federal government steps in and starts floating these projects [it will support the rest of the construction industry],” says Strickland. “[Once] projects are freed up, the design starts, the consulting engineers [and] the architects go to work, construction folks go to work, contractors go to work, then you’re stimulating the economy and it builds confidence, puts money into the construction industry...The

broader construction industry builds confidence, and then the private sector steps in and takes it from there.”

Strickland says that while some of the greater challenges facing the industry will be solved by vaccinating the public and ending the pandemic, COVID’s effects on the size of the workforce itself will take years to recover the losses due to the pandemic. He says both governments and industry members need to be more proactive in growing the labour force now by attracting more young and diverse employees, especially women and people of colour. He adds that workforce development agreements attached to large infrastructure projects, which come with requirements like maintaining a certain number of apprentices on a job site, have been successful in places like Nova Scotia in increasing the skilled trades labour supply.



THE COST OF HOME OWNERSHIP



Mark Mitanis

The **City of Oshawa** continues to have the highest residential property tax rates across 27 GTHA municipalities, while residents in the **City of Toronto** continue to enjoy the lowest rates.

In 2020, average property tax rates decreased from 2019 by an average of 0.02736 per cent for residential properties and 0.06829 per cent for multi-residential properties. All municipalities within **Durham Region** ranked inside the top 10 for highest residential property tax rates.

The **City of Hamilton** recorded the highest multi-residential property tax rate at 2.72918 per cent, while the **City of Markham's** 0.62819 per cent multi-residential property tax rate was the lowest in the region.

Richmond Hill, Vaughan, and **Markham** had the lowest residential and multi-residential tax rates in the GTHA, while the **Peel Region** municipalities of **Caledon, Brampton** and **Mississauga** registered residential property tax rates in the middle of the pack.

"Through sound fiscal management and efficiencies, the city has for a second consecutive year in 2020, delivered a zero per cent net tax change," city of Brampton chief administrative officer **David Barrick** told *NRU* in an emailed statement. "Brampton

is among the fastest growing cities in Canada, and as a city of opportunities, we continue to attract investment and businesses and offer a conducive environment for livability and economic prosperity." 🌱

2020 GTHA RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL TAX RATES

Earlier this year, we neglected to assemble our lists of the annual residential, commercial and industrial tax rates across municipalities in the GTHA in July, when we typically do. We present here the 2020 GTHA municipal tax rates, with apologies for the delay. Please watch for next year's (2021) residential, commercial and industrial tax rates in July, as regularly scheduled.

2020 GTHA Residential and Multi-Residential Property Tax Rates

Municipality	Residential Rate (%)	Rank	Municipality	Multi-Residential Rate (%)	Rank
Oshawa	1.28850	1	Hamilton	2.72918	1
Barrie	1.21022	2	Oshawa	2.27241	2
Hamilton	1.18861	3	Brock	2.08545	3
Brock	1.18833	4	Clarington	1.97955	4
Clarington	1.13159	5	Whitby	1.93029	5
Pickering	1.10640	6	Ajax	1.86412	6
Whitby	1.10520	7	Pickering	1.85354	7
Uxbridge	1.10133	8	Scugog	1.83341	8
Ajax	1.06975	9	Brampton	1.51752	9
Scugog	1.05330	10	Halton Hills	1.40429	10
Georgina	0.99245	11	Burlington	1.36812	11
Brampton	0.95330	12	Oakville	1.26693	12
Caledon	0.79667	13	Caledon	1.26163	13
King	0.79301	14	Barrie	1.21022	14
Mississauga	0.78596	15	Milton	1.18440	15
Newmarket	0.78388	16	Uxbridge	1.09933	16
Halton Hills	0.77864	17	Toronto	1.09340	17
East Gwillimbury	0.77729	18	Georgina	0.99245	18
Aurora	0.75289	19	Mississauga	0.95408	19
Whitchurch-Stouffville	0.72466	20	King	0.79301	20
Burlington	0.71665	21	Newmarket	0.78388	21
Oakville	0.70997	22	East Gwillimbury	0.77729	22
Milton	0.66870	23	Aurora	0.75289	23
Vaughan	0.66530	24	Whitchurch-Stouffville	0.72466	24
Richmond Hill	0.65311	25	Vaughan	0.66530	25
Markham	0.62819	26	Richmond Hill	0.65311	26
Toronto	0.59970	27	Markham	0.62819	27

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ROUNDED TO 5 DECIMAL POINTS
SOURCE: MUNICIPALITIES

THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS



Mark Mitanis

Commercial and industrial property tax rates continued to decline among GTHA municipalities in 2020. Compared to 2019, commercial rates across 27 GTHA municipalities decreased by an average of 0.66171 per cent, while industrial tax rates decreased by an average of 0.13562 per cent.

The **City of Hamilton** once again recorded the highest commercial and industrial property tax rates in the region. The **Town of Milton** had the lowest commercial tax rate in 2020, with the **City of Markham** registering the lowest industrial rate for the year. **Vaughan** and **Richmond Hill** were also among the GTHA municipalities with the lowest commercial and industrial tax rates.

“Vaughan has one of the lowest tax rates in the Greater Toronto Area,” said an emailed statement to *NRU* from the City of Vaughan. “For the 11th consecutive year, the city has delivered a property tax rate that is at or below three per cent. Vaughan’s total tax rate is below average across all property classes. It is also anticipated that Vaughan’s total tax rate will continue to be one of the lowest in 2021.”

Toronto’s commercial and industrial tax rates of 2.1718 per cent and 2.2408 per cent reflect a strategy to enhance the city’s business climate by continuing to reduce tax rates

for commercial, industrial, and multi-residential properties to a target of 2.5 times the residential rate. 🌱

2020 GTHA Commercial & Industrial Property Tax Rates

Municipality	Commercial Rate (%)	Rank	Municipality	Industrial Rate (%)	Rank
Hamilton	3.03051	1	Hamilton	4.59980	1
Oshawa	2.62647	2	Brock	3.33910	2
Brock	2.51421	3	Whitby	3.31768	3
Barrie	2.49513	4	Oshawa	3.27768	4
Clarington	2.39897	5	Clarington	3.23020	5
Whitby	2.36070	6	Ajax	3.10505	6
Ajax	2.30929	7	Pickering	3.09358	7
Pickering	2.30107	8	Scugog	3.07176	8
Scugog	2.28544	9	Uxbridge	2.99082	9
Uxbridge	2.22743	10	Barrie	2.66548	10
Toronto	2.17181	11	Halton Hills	2.40622	11
Georgina	2.01430	12	Georgina	2.35940	12
Brampton	1.98280	13	Oakville	2.26263	13
Mississauga	1.90491	14	Brampton	2.24248	14
Caledon	1.81210	15	Toronto	2.24089	15
King	1.74925	16	Burlington	2.22766	16
Newmarket	1.73709	17	Milton	2.17636	17
East Gwillimbury	1.72831	18	Caledon	2.09015	18
Aurora	1.69581	19	Mississauga	2.08828	19
Halton Hills	1.68181	20	King	2.03166	20
Whitchurch-Stouffville	1.65819	21	Newmarket	2.01668	21
Burlington	1.59152	22	East Gwillimbury	2.00584	22
Oakville	1.58178	23	Aurora	1.96575	23
Vaughan	1.57900	24	Whitchurch-Stouffville	1.91934	24
Richmond Hill	1.56288	25	Vaughan	1.82200	25
Markham	1.52969	26	Richmond Hill	1.80178	26
Milton	1.52167	27	Markham	1.76083	27

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ROUNDED TO 5 DECIMAL POINTS
SOURCE: MUNICIPALITIES

TOP-10 DEVELOPMENT LAW FIRMS



Peter Pantalone

After a year like no other, *NRU* presents our annual review of the GTHA's top planning and development law firms, based on an analysis of **Local Planning Appeal Tribunal** (LPAT) decisions issued between August, 2019 and July, 2020, as well as ongoing appeals that have not yet concluded.

Earlier this year, it appeared that the number of LPAT appeals being filed and subsequently resolved in some form or another, were on track to surpass the previous year's number of appeals, a trend that has continued year after year now for quite some time.

Then, the world ground to a halt as a significant proportion of the workforce was ordered to isolate at home to limit social contact and curb the spread of the novel coronavirus—now too well-known to us as COVID-19. For a period of time, all LPAT hearings were cancelled as administrators scrambled to put together an infrastructure that would enable the Tribunal to resume hearings virtually.

In spite of this massive disruption to daily life as we knew it, the show must go on, and it did. At first, only non-contested matters were scheduled for virtual LPAT

hearings, in light of concerns that some parties could be prejudiced by the new electronic hearing format. Then, incrementally, cancelled hearings were rescheduled, and the Tribunal ramped up its ability to resume more complicated appeals in a virtual setting.

Although there were fewer cases considered in this year's law review as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were still plenty of decisions issued to allow for robust rankings. Settlements were approved for large-scale master-planned projects including the redevelopment of the former Imperial Oil Lands in Port Credit for a mixed-use community with nearly 3,000 residential units, as well as the redevelopment of the former York Downs Golf Club for 2,421 housing units.

After hard-fought contested hearings, the LPAT issued decisions to approve a pair of 32-storey towers in downtown Hamilton known as the "Radio City" development, and to reject a mid-rise development proposal adjacent to Pickering's Frenchman's Bay, largely on urban design grounds.

This year's top-10 features many familiar firms, as well as some surprising

reconfigurations. There is a new #1 this year (although no stranger to that spot) as well as some significant ascents up the rankings. Notwithstanding COVID-induced disruptions, LPAT caseloads remained strong amid a sustained rate of residential and commercial development applications throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas.

Congratulations to the firms featured over the following pages. *NRU* wishes all of our readers a safe, healthy holiday season, and a socially-distanced (hopefully not for too much longer), happy new year!



1 [2] **Davies Howe LLP**

Solicitors: **John Alati, Kimberly Beckman, Jamie Cole, Zachary Fleisher, Mark Flowers, Kyle Gossen**, (Nadia Kadri), **Ava Kanner, Samantha Lampert, Alex Lusty, Andy Margaritis, Meaghan McDermid, Michael Melling, Robert Miller, Aaron Platt, Susan Rosenthal, Christopher Sivry, Daniel Steinberg and Andrew Valela.**

The formidable team at Davies Howe leads the pack in this year's GTHA

rankings, achieving several significant wins and racking up no losses over this year's decision-reporting window. Among its biggest victories this year, Davies Howe obtained an approval for a significant development on the Jaffari Community Centre lands in Thornhill, which proposes to add retail, townhouses and mid-rise condominiums and seniors' housing to the site, while retaining the existing place of worship. The development was unsuccessfully opposed by the local residents' association in a contested hearing.

Davies Howe also represented developer Erindale Village Living in its appeal for a mid-rise development in Mississauga's Erindale neighbourhood. The development was opposed by the City on urban design and heritage grounds, but was ultimately found by the LPAT to represent appropriate land-use planning. Other notable wins included securing approvals for several high-rise developments in Mississauga, and achieving settlements for development charges-related appeals in Mississauga and Richmond Hill.

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2019 LAW REVIEW

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Cases: Representing Daniels HR Corporation (PL180262 – Flowers) (S); representing Sharonvit Homes (PL170745 – Melling, Kadri) (S); representing Richmond Hill Retirement Inc., Oakridge Gardens Retirement Partnership and Yonge MCD Inc. (PL180073 – Flowers, Alati, Platt, Fleisher) (S); representing Kathryn Hicks (PL131393 – Rosenthal) (S); representing Amacon Development (DC140020 – Rosenthal, Lusty) (S); representing Luisa & Jim Mocon (PL171304 – Alati) (S); representing Forestside Estates (PL171674 – McDermid, Lusty); representing Halton Region (LC120008 – Melling); representing Claremont Development Corporation (PL171210 – Alati, Lusty); representing King David Inc. (PL140614 – McDermid); representing Islamic Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Toronto (PL171236 – Flowers, Lampert) (S); representing Gatehollow Estates (PL170836 – Melling) (S); representing JD Development Group (PL180244 – Platt, Kadri, Lusty); representing North Whitby Holdings and North Brooklin Holdings (PL180720 – Flowers, Lampert); representing Dorsay (Residential) Development (PL180368 – Lampert, Gossen); representing Chelton

Developments (PL180373 – McDermid, Kadri) (S); representing Queensville Properties Development (PL171433 – Rosenthal, Margaritis) (S); representing ClubLink (PL180159 – Flowers, Lampert, Gossen); representing Midvale Estates and 2117969 Ontario Inc. (PL180341 – Alati); representing Twenty Road East Landowners (PL090114 – Rosenthal, Lampert); representing Fielding Chemical Technologies (PL190221 – Rosenthal, Cole); representing Mars Canada Inc. (PL190106 – Rosenthal, Cole); representing Osmington Inc. (PL190371 – Flowers, Margaritis); representing multiple appellants (PL170058 – Melling, Fleisher); representing 2109179 Ontario Inc. (PL190248 – Melling); representing Laurier Harbour (Keele) Inc. (PL171643 – Platt) (S); representing CGIV Developments Inc. (PL171206 – Alati, Margaritis) (S); representing Snelgrove Plaza Inc. and DiBattista Gambin Developments (PL151203 – Alati, Lusty); representing Digram Developments Brampton (PL180292 – Flowers) (S); representing Erindale Village Living Inc. (PL171203 – Platt, Lampert) (V); representing SO Developments Inc. PL180364

– Melling); representing North Leslie Residential Landowners Group (DC160010 – Melling, Lusty) (S); and representing Unipetro Investments (PL171373 – Melling, Lusty).



2 [5] Turkstra Mazza

Solicitors: John Anthony Cleworth, Shelley Kaufman, Paul Mazza, Jennifer Meader, Nancy Smith, Scott Snider, Anna Toumanians and Herman Turkstra.

Turkstra Mazza continues its upward ascent in our GTHA rankings, sliding into the penultimate place on the podium. Over the past several years, the firm has grown from focusing primarily on cases in the Hamilton area, to taking on highly-complex appeals across Ontario.

In its biggest win this year, the firm successfully represented developer Television City Hamilton Inc. in its appeal for planning approvals to permit a pair of 32-storey towers in downtown Hamilton. The appeal was opposed by the City of Hamilton, as well as a local residents' association. After reserving its decision for nearly a year, the Tribunal found in favour of the developer's proposal and authorized the necessary approvals.

Cases: Representing Paletta International (PL020959 – Snider, Toumanians,

Kaufman); representing Penta Properties (PL170728 – Snider); representing Kathryn Stewart (PL190105 – Meader) (S); representing Concerned Residents of Westdale (PL180302 – Meader, Smith); representing Northwest Brampton Landowners Group (PL170674 – Snider, Kaufman); representing MM Green Developments (Stoney Creek) (PL180355 – Smith) (V); representing 2417985 Ontario Inc. and 2417972 Ontario Inc. (PL170858 – Snider, Toumanians) (V); representing ADMNS Brampton Investment Corporation (PL171260 – Snider, Kaufman) (S); representing Durham Region Home Builders' Association (DC180020 – Meader); representing Kennedy Road Owners Group (PL171426 – Snider, Toumanians) (S); representing Al Kitab Academy (PL170430 – Meader) (X); representing Halloway Developments and 1131390 Ontario Inc. (PL101409 – Meader) (S); representing Penta Properties and Upper Centennial Development (PL170991 – Toumanians); representing Silvestri Homes (PL190056 – Snider, Toumanians); representing Waterdown Bay Ltd. (PL180857 – Toumanians) (S); representing Silverwood Homes (PL171179 – Snider); representing Dave Stephens and Brian Ritskes (PL140314 – Turkstra) (S); representing Harbour West Neighbours Inc.

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2019 LAW REVIEW

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(PL170742 – Toumanians) (S); representing Aryeh Construction (PL180368 – Meader); representing Pat Paletta Livestock (PL180696 – Snider) (✓); representing Effort Trust (PL090114 – Snider, Toumanians); representing 2362302 Ontario Inc. (DC190022 – Toumanians); representing MJJJ Developments (PL190106 – Meader); representing Penta Properties and Paletta International Corp. (PL190287 – Snider, Toumanians); representing Losani Homes (1998) Ltd. (PL171388 – Meader) (S); representing North West Brampton Landowners Group (PL190371 – Snider); representing Television City Hamilton (PL180255 – Smith, Meader) (✓); representing John & Eva Vuckovic (PL190447 – Snider, Toumanians); representing Graydon Banning Ltd. (PL170735 – Snider, Meader) (S); representing Penta Properties and Upper Centennial Developments (PL161115 – Snider, Toumanians) (S); representing IMH 2185 Sheridan and 2250 Homelands Inc. (PL180902 – Snider, Meader) (✓); representing Ingrid Lane (PL190238 – Meader) (X); representing Burnt Log

Management (PL170473 – Snider) (S); representing Hodero Holdings (PL180499 – Snider, Toumanians) (S); representing Penta Properties (PL190367 – Snider) (✓); and representing Sierra Lane (2000) Developments (DC000032 – Snider).

AIRD BERLIS

3 [1] Aird & Berlis

Solicitors: **Meaghan Barrett, Maggie Bassani, Eileen Costello, Laura Dean, Patricia Foran, Ajay Gajaria, Tom Halinski, Patrick Harrington, Matthew Helfand, Rebecca Hines, Kim Kovar, Leo Longo, John Mascarin, David Neligan, John Pappas, Jane Pepino, Andrea Skinner, Sidonia Tomasella, Peter Van Loan, Christopher Williams and Steven Zakem.**

Law Review regulars Aird & Berlis move down two places but remain in the top three after another busy year that brought them high-profile wins for a diverse range of clients.

In a high-profile victory, partner Leo Longo represented North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance in its appeal of the Township of Georgina's adoption of an Official Plan Amendment arising out of

its Official Plan review and Growth Plan conformity exercise. The OPA maintained an "Urban Residential Area" designation on a 200-hectare property owned by developer Maple Lake Estates, which had a decades-old standing approval for a 1000+ unit residential subdivision. The Forest Alliance successfully argued that the lands should be re-designated to "Environmental Protection Area" in light of the presence of extensive Provincially-significant wetlands. Despite tough opposition from Maple Lake Estates and the Township, the Tribunal sided with the Forest Alliance and ordered the re-designation of the lands. A request for a review of the decision by the developer was subsequently denied by the Tribunal.

Cases: Representing Wilbear Holdings Inc. and 10898 Yonge Street LP (PL180073 – Foran); representing First Capital (Appleby) Corporation (PL171234 – Costello, Neligan); representing 2366885 Ontario Inc. (PL171333 – Harrington); representing Queenston Road Holdings (PL180235 – Foran) (S); representing King Township (PL170998 – Halinski) (S); representing D.D. 37 Johnson Ltd. (PL171075 – Pepino) (✓); representing Kleinberg North Holdings (PL190045 – Neligan) (✓); representing East Valley Farms Ltd. and Whitby Con Seven Developments Ltd. (PL101409 – Skinner) (S); representing King Township

(PL190076 – Neligan) (✓); representing NHDG (Waterdown) (PL180857 – Harrington) (S); representing Paul & Benita Jones (PL180789 – Barrett) (✓); representing North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance (PL161206 – Longo) (✓); representing Orlando Corporation (PL190103 – Longo); representing Orlando Corporation (PL141189 – Longo); representing Peel Region (PL190371 – Longo, Neligan); representing King Township (PL180116 – Halinski) (S); representing Binbrook Heritage Developments (PL170981 – Neligan); representing Plaza Imports Ltd. (PL180816 – Harrington, Barrett); representing CP REIT Properties Inc. (PL170817 – Harrington) (S); representing Bolton Option 3 Landowners Group (PL170058 – Harrington, Van Loan); representing Halton Region (PL170735 – Halinski, Neligan); representing a group of local residents (PL190238 – Longo) (✓); representing Fengate Hamilton Lands GP (PL180548 – Harrington) (S); representing BK Prime Ontario 1 LP (PL180499 – Harrington); representing Mayfield West Phase 2 Landowners Group (PL151203 – Harrington); representing King Township (PL171272 – Halinski); and representing LCT Investment Group (PL171187 – Harrington).

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4 [3] Kagan Shastri

Solicitors: **Ira Kagan, Kristie Jennings** and **Paul DeMelo**.

Clocking in at fourth place is Kagan Shastri, a boutique law firm comprising a trio of talented planning and municipal lawyers. The firm achieved several notable wins this year and had no reported losses over this year's law review decision window.

Representing a consortium of developers known as Waterfront Shores Corporation, the firm secured a settlement with a local residents' association after it appealed the City of Hamilton's adoption of planning approvals to facilitate a master-planned development of former industrial lands at Pier 8, a waterfront site. The settlement secured approvals for 1,645 residential units in multiple buildings ranging from five to eight storeys in height.

Kagan Shastri also scored a victory representing developer Queenscorp in its appeal for an infill subdivision located next to the Port Credit GO station in Mississauga, despite opposition from the City and from local residents, and successfully

represented the owner of a Richmond Hill commercial-retail property in its appeal to permit an additional stand-alone restaurant building and to amend site-specific parking requirements.

Cases: Representing Dogliola Developments (PL180073 – Kagan, Jennings); representing the City of Mississauga (DC140020 – DeMelo) (S); representing TACC Holborn Corporation (PL170674 – Kagan, Jennings); representing Emilio Russo (PL171444 – Kagan, Jennings) (S); representing 2103386 Ontario Inc. (PL190237 – DeMelo) (V); representing Hatpin Developments (PL171487 – DeMelo) (S); representing Block 10 Thornhill Woods Developers Group (PL171236 – Kagan); representing Rice Commercial Group (PL180367 – Kagan, Jennings); representing Valley Major Developments (PL171406 – Kagan, Jennings) (S); representing Waterfront Shores Corporation (PL170742 – Kagan, Jennings) (S); representing Kirby 27 Developments Ltd., East Kleinberg Developments Inc. and 104501 Ontario Ltd. (PL190339 – Kagan, Jennings); representing Times Group Corp. (PL180368 – Kagan,

Jennings); representing Block 47-1 Landowners Group and Block 47-2 Landowners Group (PL180276 – Kagan, Jennings); representing National Homes (Goreway) Inc. (PL171155 – Kagan, Jennings) (S); representing Lina DiMartino (PL190108 – DeMelo) (V); representing Block 47-1 Landowners Group and Block 47-2 Landowners Group (PL141189 – Jennings); representing National Homes (Plains Road) LP (PL180446 – Kagan, Jennings) (S); representing Queenscorp (Mona Road) Inc. (PL170371 – Kagan, Jennings) (V); representing the Municipality of Clarington (PL170817 – DeMelo) (S); representing Martillac Estates (PL170735 – Kagan, Jennings); representing Caledon 410 Developments (PL151203 – Kagan); representing T-York 7 Holding Ltd. (PL170686 – Kagan, Jennings) (V); representing Canuck Properties Ltd. (PL171187 – Kagan); representing National Homes (Brant) Inc. (PL180331 – Kagan, Jennings); representing Leslie Elgin Developments Inc. and 775377 Ontario Ltd. (DC160010 – DeMelo) (S); and representing Block 18 Landowners Group and Block 18 Properties (PL160978 – Jennings).

WeirFoulds LLP

5 [4] WeirFoulds

Solicitors: **Denise Baker, Lia Boritz, John Buhlman, Jeff Cowan, Chantal DeSereville,**

Bruce Engell, Aisling Flarity, Sean Foran, Raj Kehar, Barnet Kussner, (Michael McQuaid), **Gregory Richards, Sylvain Rouleau** and **Christopher Tzekas**.

The team at WeirFoulds remains in the top-five after another busy year handling an array of complex cases. In its highest-profile triumph of the year, WeirFoulds represented development group Port Credit West Village Partners in securing a settlement for the redevelopment of the former Imperial Oil refinery lands in Mississauga. The settlement paves the way for a massive mixed-use redevelopment of the former brownfield site with nearly 3,000 residential units, as well as several hectares of new public waterfront parkland.

The firm also achieved a settlement on behalf of King Stuart Developments and 1376553 Ontario Ltd. to permit a mid-rise development adjacent to the West Harbour GO station in Hamilton, and represented the municipalities of Brampton, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Hamilton and Mississauga in a range of planning appeals.

Cases: Representing the City of Mississauga (PL190105 – Kehar) (S); representing Parkside Hills Inc. (PL101121 – Baker, McQuaid); representing the City of Richmond Hill (PL180073 – Kussner) (S); representing Loblaw Companies Ltd. (PL171234

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– Kussner); representing the City of Brampton (PL170674 – Kussner); representing Paletta International (LC120008 – Tzekas); representing the City of Richmond Hill (PL170619 – Kussner); representing the City of Brampton (PL171460 – Rouleau) (✓); representing King Stuart Developments and 1376553 Ontario Inc. (PL190020 – Baker) (S); representing the City of Mississauga (PL171169 – Kehar) (X); representing the City of Vaughan (PL170836 – Baker) (S); representing Losani Homes (PL170991 – Baker); representing Port Credit West Village Partners (PL180196 – Baker) (S); representing the City of Hamilton (PL170742 – Kussner) (S); representing the City of Brampton (PL180276 – Kussner); representing Fairway Hills Residents Association (PL180158 – Baker); representing Demik Developments (PL090114 – Baker); representing LIV Communities (PL190378 – Baker); representing the City of Brampton (PL141189 – Kussner); representing the City of Mississauga (PL190415 – Kehar) (S); representing Spruce Properties Inc. and Amico Properties Inc. (PL190468 – Baker); representing Harmony on Twenty Properties (PL171243

– Baker) (S); representing the City of Richmond Hill (PL171202 – Kussner) (S); representing Andrew John Luke (LC190002 – Foran); representing the Estate of Manuel Haralambus (LC180002 – Kehar); representing the City of Vaughan (PL171187 – Baker); representing the City of Richmond Hill (DC160010 – Kussner, Meader) (✓); and representing Sonoma Homes Inc. (PL170371 – Baker) (S).



6 [9] Borden Ladner Gervais

Solicitors: **Andrew Baker, Katie Butler, Liviu Cananau, F.F. (Rick) Coburn, Jonathan Cocker, Lee English, Simon Fung, Barbora Grochalova, Gabrielle Kramer, Julie Lesage, Piper Morley, J. Pitman Patterson, Frank Spurduti, Isaac Tang, Stephen Waqué and Robert Wood.**

Borden Ladner Gervais moves up three places since last year's review, to snatch the sixth spot in this year's Law Review. The firm achieved notable settlements in Richmond Hill, where it represented Gil, Maria and Malvina Shcolyar in obtaining approvals for an infill subdivision that will

conserve and integrate two heritage dwellings, and in Hamilton, where it represented grain terminal and flour mill owner Parrish & Heimbecker in appeals regarding the development of Pier 8. In the latter, P&H's concerns were settled through a compromise involving the registration of land use compatibility agreements on title.

BLG also successfully represented York Region in a contested hearing involving appeals by certain landowners to have their lands included in the Whitchurch-Stouffville settlement area boundary, which concluded with an LPAT order that the lands be designated "Natural Linkage".

Cases: Representing Gil, Maria and Malvina Shcolyar (PL180163 – Tang, Lesage) (S); representing the City of Vaughan (PL171236 – Patterson, Baker) (S); representing the City of Brampton (LC180031 – Cananau); representing Richard and Susan Deacon (PL170580 – Tang) (S); representing York Region (LC120014 – Cananau); representing Parrish & Heimbecker Ltd. (PL170742 – Patterson) (S); representing the City of Markham (PL180368 – Patterson, Morley); representing York Region (PL171393 – Patterson, Grochalova) (✓); representing the City of Vaughan (PL180665 – Patterson, Lesage) (S); representing York Region (PL130548 – Waqué); representing Halton Region

(PL180158 – Tang, Lesage, Butler); representing Mohawk College (DC190022 – Morley); representing Ontari Holdings, BoltCol Holdings South and BoltCol Holdings North (DC190106 – Patterson, Morley); representing Halton Region (PL190287 – Tang, Baker); representing Halton Region (PL171500 – Tang); representing Halton Region (PL190371 – Baker); representing 1583618 Ontario Ltd. and Wilstar Management (PL180816 – Butler); representing BoltCol Holdings South (PL170058 – Morley); representing Halton Region (PL180499 – Tang) (S); representing 2232767 Ontario Inc. (PL170686 – Waqué, Baker) (X); representing Halton Region (LC190002 – Morley); representing Halton Region (LC180003 – Morley); representing Halton Region (LC170017 – Cananau); representing York Region (PL111184 – Patterson); and representing the City of Vaughan (PL160978 – Patterson, Morley).



7 [8] Goodmans

Solicitors: **Ian Andres, Anne Benedetti, David Bronskill, Tom Friedland, Joseph Hoffman, Roslyn Houser, Robert Howe, Matthew Lakatos-Hayward, Max Laskin, Allan Leibel, Catherine Lyons and Mark Noskiewicz.**

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Goodmans retains a place in the top-10, keeping busy with a range of appeals across the GTHA. The firm represented Format Group in a contested hearing regarding Format's appeals for planning approvals to permit an infill development in the Lorne Park neighbourhood in the City of Mississauga. Although faced with opposing planning evidence from the City and from a neighbour, Format prevailed and obtained its approvals.

Goodmans also represented Metroview Development (Harding) and secured approvals for a 22-storey point tower and 22 townhouses in Richmond Hill, and helped to achieve a settlement for the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) in its appeal of the City of Mississauga's Development Charges By-law 0161-2014.

Cases: Representing Trillium Health Partners (PL180262 – Lyons) (S); representing Knightstone Capital Management II Inc. (PL180302 – Bronskill); representing BILD (DC140020 – Howe) (S); representing Metroview Developments (Harding) (PL170619 – Andres); representing BILD (DC190003 – Howe);

representing 1310984 Ontario Inc. (Andres) (X); representing Reserve Properties (PL180721 – Bronskill); representing Format Group (PL171169 – Andres) (V); representing Saeid Shojaei (PL190077 – Laskin) (V); representing Mohanjit and Jatinder Dhoot (PL180867 – Bronskill) (V); representing Forest Bay Homes (PL180244 – Benedetti); representing Mattamy (Thickson) Ltd. (PL180720 – Howe); representing AMA Development Corp. (PL101409 – Andres) (S); representing 9265988 Canada Corp. and 9183183 Canada Corp. (PL171285 – Laskin) (S); representing Exquisite Living Homes (PL190235 – Hoffman) (V); representing Triple Crown Line Developments (PL180037 – Bronskill); representing Maple Lake Estates (PL161206 – Bronskill) (X); representing the Town of Oakville (PL180158 – Howe); representing the Elfrida Landowners (PL090114 – Noskiewicz); representing RioTrin Properties (Burnhamthorpe) (PL190221 – Benedetti); representing CPC II Management Inc. (PL180300 – Laskin) (S); representing Metroview Developments (Harding) (PL171202 – Andres) (S); and representing

King Ridge Developments (PL171272 – Bronskill).



8 [6] Loopstra Nixon

Solicitors: **Quinto Annibale, Joseph Cortellucci, Steven Ferri, Mark Joblin, Michael Nemanic, Mandy Ng and Brendan Ruddick.**

Coming in at eighth place is Loopstra Nixon, a firm that has developed a reputation for strong and effective advocacy in LPAT proceedings. In a notable hearing, the firm represented the City of Pickering in opposition to an eight-storey apartment building on the east shore of Frenchman's Bay. The Tribunal ruled in the City's favour and found that the proposed development would fail to achieve key urban design policies of the Pickering Official Plan.

Loopstra Nixon also represented the City of Mississauga in a significant appeal for the redevelopment of the former Imperial Oil Refinery lands in Port Credit, which was resolved through a broadly-endorsed settlement.

Cases: Representing the City of Pickering (PL171210 – Annibale); representing the City of Mississauga (PL180867 – Ruddick) (X); representing Bushland Heights (PL170998 – Ferri) (S); representing Preserve Thornhill Woods Association (PL171236 – Ruddick) (X); representing

Brookvalley Developments North (PL180270 – Ruddick); representing the City of Mississauga (PL180806 – Ruddick, Ng) (V); representing the City of Mississauga (PL180196 – Annibale, Joblin) (S); representing the City of Mississauga (PL190221 – Joblin); representing the City of Mississauga (PL171027 – Ruddick) (V); representing the City of Pickering (PL180300 – Joblin) (S); representing Bushland Heights (PL180116 – Ferri, Ruddick) (S); representing Coco Paving and CRH Canada (PL170817 – Ferri) (S); representing the City of Pickering (PL171171 – Annibale, Joblin) (V); representing Bolton North Hill Landowners Association (PL170058 – Ferri); representing Carlo Di Gioacchino and Lorraine Bortolussi (PL190331 – Joblin) (X); representing the Township of Uxbridge (PL150909 – Annibale, Ruddick); and representing the City of Mississauga (PL171203 – Annibale, Joblin) (X).
Solicitors: **Daniel Artenosi, Natalie Ast, Michael Cara,**



9 [10] Overland

Christopher Tanzola and Brad Teichman.

In ninth place, we have Overland LLP. Overland is a boutique planning, development and municipal

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firm that has established itself as a strong force in these areas of the law. Overland had several wins and settlements over the past year, including a settlement of several residents' appeals of Oakville's First and Second Street Heritage Conservation District. The firm also successfully represented Highview Building Corp. and obtained planning approvals for a 27-unit residential development in Kleinberg that was scaled back from an earlier proposal for a nine-storey mid-rise building.

Cases: Representing Larencore Homes (PL171304 – Artenosi, Cara) (S); representing Alpa Stone (PL170674 – Tanzola, Ast); representing Bob and Eileen Wilkes, Kathy Giankos and Mario Botelho (MM160001 – Artenosi) (S); representing Gurpreet Gill (PL180316 – Artenosi); representing 2522772 Ontario Ltd. (PL171444 – Artenosi, Cara) (S); representing Bindra and Parminder Mundi (PL120202 – Artenosi) (S); representing Liberata D'Aversa (PL111184 – Tanzola) (S); representing Highview Building Corp (PL170602 – Tanzola) (S); representing Alpa Stone (PL171155 – Tanzola, Ast) (S); representing Centra (BT1) Inc. (PL170960 – Artenosi)

(S); representing Carlo and Flora Vigna (PL190331 – Artenosi, Ast) (V); representing Creditview 4P Holdings (PL170679 – Artenosi, Cara); and representing Ashlen Holdings (PL170863 – Tanzola, Cara) (S).

Ritchie Ketcheson
Hart & Biggart
LLP

10 [7] Ritchie Ketcheson Hart & Biggart

Solicitors: **R. Andrew Biggart, John R. Hart, Christina Kapelos, Bruce C. Ketcheson and John C. Ritchie.**

Capping off our list of the top-10 firms is Ritchie Ketcheson Hart & Biggart, a small but mighty group of solicitors that almost exclusively represents upper- and lower-tier municipalities. Among its victories this year were settlement approvals for neighbouring estate-residential subdivisions in King Township, and a win on behalf of Whitchurch-Stouffville which maintained a "Natural Linkages" designation on disputed lands whose owners fought, unsuccessfully, for a land use designation that would permit more-intense residential development.

Cases: Representing the City of Burlington (PLL020959 – Ketcheson, Biggart); representing the City of Hamilton (PL180203 – Biggart); representing the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (DC190003 – Biggart); representing the City of Burlington (PL180721 – Biggart); representing Durham Region (DC180020 – Biggart, Hart); representing the Town of Aurora (PL190077 – Kapelos) (X); representing Mansions of King Inc. (PL170998 – Ketcheson) (S); representing the Town of Whitby (PL180720 – Biggart); representing the City of Hamilton (PL171179 – Biggart); representing the Town of Georgina (PL161206 – Ketcheson) (X); representing the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (PL171393 – Biggart) (V); representing the City of Markham (PL130548 – Ketcheson); representing the City of Markham (PL190108 – Kapelos) (X); representing the Town of Aurora (PL190254 – Biggart); representing Mansions of King

Inc. (PL180116 – Ketcheson) (S); representing the City of Hamilton (PL170981 – Kapelos); representing Zancor Homes (Bolton) (PL170058 – Biggart); and representing the City of Burlington (PL020959 – Biggart).

THE NEXT 10 FIRMS...

11 [17] Thomson Rogers; 12 [N/A] Davis Webb; 13 [18] Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt; 14 [12] Cassels; 15 (N/A) O'Connor MacLeod Hanna; 16 [19] Wood Bull; 17 [11] Gardiner Roberts; 18 [N/A] Devry Smith Frank; 19 [16] Donnelly Law; 20 [N/A] Dentons. 🌸

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LAW REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Our end-of-year tradition at NRU examines the legal side of planning and development in the GTHA, primarily focusing on cases that came before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and were reported in the GTHA edition of NRU between August 1, 2019 and July 31, 2020.

How the information is collected—NRU tracked each of the law firms mentioned in the GTHA edition of NRU over a one-year period. Then we determined the firms most

frequently mentioned and sorted through their projects and hearings. Some firms were involved in a variety of developments across the GTHA, while others have particular associations to major clients.

Determining the top 10—Balancing the number and complexity of appeals, the diversity of issues, and the success of outcomes, is NRU's most difficult task. The review does not account for cases we do not know about.

Hence, there is some degree of subjectivity in the ranking.

The Listing—Lawyers that are part of the planning and development law team in each of the top-10 ranked firms are noted. Names in parentheses indicate lawyers who were previously with the firm, but left prior to NRU's 2019/20 reporting window.

The client, LPAT case number, and relevant solicitor(s) are noted for each contributing case. In cases that involved an LPAT decision where there

was a clear winner, loser, or settlement, the appropriate symbol (✓) or (X) OR (S) follows the case description. If there was no clear win/loss/settlement, or the matter involved a prehearing or was still ongoing by July, 2020, no symbol appears. A square bracket after this year's ranking indicates the firm's placement in last year's NRU ranking.

Email us your LPAT decisions to ensure that they are covered in NRU and thus included in the 23rd annual GTHA rankings to be published in December, 2021.

— PEOPLE —

Paul Dubé has been reappointed **Ombudsman Ontario** ombudsman. Dubé's second

term will begin April 1.

Glenn MacMillan has been appointed **Lake Simcoe Region**

Conservation Authority (LSCRA) development and restoration general manager. Previously, he was **Toronto**

and Region Conservation Authority water and energy senior manager. MacMillan replaces outgoing general

manager **Rob Baldwin**, who is now LSCRA chief administrative officer.