Regina Climbs to #4 in National Housing Benchmarking Study

Rank	Municipality	Planning features (1-Best)	Approvals timelines (1=Best)	Government charges Low-Rise (1=Lowest)	Government charges High-Rise (1=Lowest)
1	Edmonton	6	4	8	9
2	Halifax	1	13	6	2
3	London	5	7	9	15
4	Regina	14	3	5	8
5	Calgary	7	6	13	10
6	Moncton	18	2	1	1
7	Charlottetown	22	5	2	3
8	Kelowna	15	8	11	5
9	Kamloops	21	10	7	6
10	Surrey	11	9	14	13
11	Saskatoon	16	1	18	7
12	St. John's	20	12	3	4

The City of Regina made progress in improving its housing approval processes and affordability, moving up from #5 in 2022 to #4 in the latest 2024 Canadian Municipal Benchmarking Study.

This national study, commissioned by the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and delivered by Altus Group, evaluates 23 municipalities on planning features, approval timelines, and government charges — key factors influencing housing supply and affordability.

This improved ranking does demonstrate Regina's ongoing efforts to refine its development processes and increase transparency for home builders and developers. Implementing several of the recommendations from the 2022 report, Regina has demonstrated a commitment to efficiency and affordability in the housing market.

What's Working Well?

One of the biggest successes for Regina has been the updates to its municipal website, improving the accessibility of development-related information. Based on feedback from the previous study, the city enhanced its development guide, making it easier to read and navigate. Additionally, links to key planning tools, including checklists and zoning information, have been made more user-friendly.

Ranked #3 in Approval Timelines with an average of 3.2 months. Saskatoon ranked number 1 at 2 months, while Edmonton was at 3.4, Calgary at 4.2 Winnipeg at 10.2 months. Vancouver was at 7.7 months cutting that time in half from 2022. Meanwhile most Ontario communities were all well over a year with exception of London at 4.6 months. Toronto was over two years and Hamilton at 31 months.

The report also suggests Regina has also made progress in lowering development costs. While that was true in in 2022 when the Development Charges/Service Agreement Fee rate declined to a low of $297,000 per hectare. The authors of the study did not properly capture that data in the 2022 study and the City of Regina may have benefited from that in the 2024 study.

Since 2022, development charges in Regina have increase to $373,000 per hectare in 2025, an increase 25.6% in 3 years. That is over double the rate of inflation (11.04%) over the same period.

The report provides a high-level overview of a blended rate of government charges levied by the municipal governments and attempts to quantify the costs these charges and fees generate that is ultimately paid for by the home buyers. Regina can still boast the fifth lowest municipal fees in the study at $29,500 for a low-rise development unit. Moncton was the lowest at $8,700 and Toronto at the other end of the spectrum at $195,300.

Areas for Improvement

Despite these successes, the study identifies challenges Regina needs to address to continue improving its ranking. The city's application submission and tracking processes received relatively low scores—56% and 60%, respectively. However, Regina has plans to introduce online planning application submissions in 2025, which should enhance efficiency and transparency for developers and home builders.

Additionally, it is not clear whether the study had properly captured the zoning reforms made in 2024. The city has worked hard towards eliminating exclusionary zoning, increasing permitted building heights in mid- and high-density areas, and removing parking requirements. New policies, such as Primary Intensification Areas (allowing six-story developments within 200 meters of transit routes) and Secondary Intensification Areas (allowing four-story developments within 800 meters of transit hubs), are expected to support higher-density development and improve housing supply over time.

What also must be noted but was not captured in the study. Other than the Concept Plan approval for CooperTown, not one new neighbourhood has been approved by City Council since 2017 (The Towns). Regina is at risk of a significant housing crises in the near future if it does not get new neighbourhoods approved this spring in 2025.

The Cost of Delays

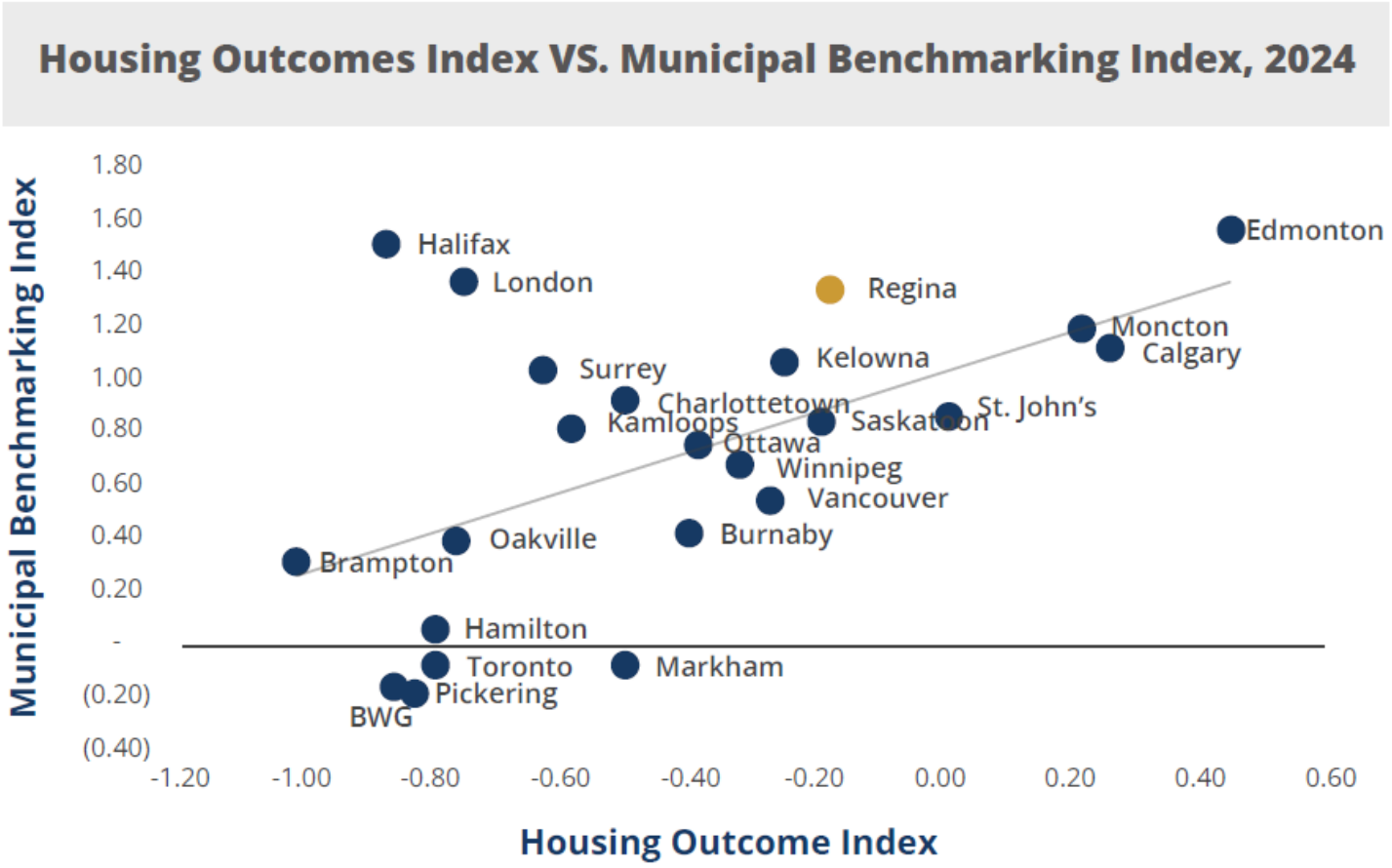
One of the most critical aspects of the study is how delays in municipal approvals impact housing affordability. In Regina, the indirect costs associated with approval delays—such as property taxes, financing costs, and construction cost inflation—add an estimated $3,034 per unit per month for low-rise developments. Reducing these delays could lead to more affordable housing for residents.

Housing Outcomes

The study also connects how the Municipal Benchmarking Study correlates to Housing Outcomes. The chart below shows that in general, municipalities that score low on the municipal benchmarking index have worse housing outcomes.

Higher Municipal Benchmark Index scores are positively related to a blended measure of improved housing affordability, lower suppressed household formation rates, a balanced vacancy rate, and net positive municipal migration.

Our own experience at the Regina & Region Home Builders Association confirms that when the residential construction industry through industry trade organizations like ours have a quality and positive working relationship with the municipality, housing tends to align better with demand and is more affordable.



A Path Forward

Regina's climb in the rankings is a positive step, showing that municipal improvements can yield tangible benefits for developers, homebuyers and renters. As the city continues to refine its application process, enhance zoning policies, and reduce bureaucratic delays, it has the potential to become the national leader in housing affordability and supply.

With continued focus on best practices and collaboration between industry and government, Regina can further streamline development approvals and create a more efficient, predictable, and affordable housing market for its growing population.

For more details on the study, visit: www.chba.ca/municipal-benchmarking