

Questions for the political parties

As part of the Quebec election campaign, the Association de la construction du Québec (ACQ), the Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec (APCHQ), the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec (CORPIQ) and the Institut de développement urbain du Québec (IDU) have joined forces to question the political parties on the issues that directly affect housing and construction. Construction and renovation costs, regulatory relief, the completion of new projects and workforce training are among the topics covered.

Answers from



A joint initiative of



General

01 If your party forms the next government, what will be the first action you take in the first 100 days of your mandate to help resolve the housing crisis?

Our priority will be to put housing back at the heart of government action and to quickly remove the obstacles slowing down construction. Our goal is to create the conditions that will eventually allow Quebec to build 100,000 housing units a year.

From the start of our mandate, we will act on permit and authorization timelines, labour availability, construction capacity and the administrative burden. In particular, we will introduce a performance-based approach with municipalities to speed up the issuance of residential permits, and we will impose a maximum timeline on the Quebec government when a government authorization is required to start a project.

Our plan also calls for accelerating the use of prefabricated construction and modernizing vocational training in construction. This will go hand in hand with our plan to add 40,000 social and affordable housing units over five years, ramping up to 10,000 units per year by the end of the mandate.

02 Housing falls under several ministries, institutions and public policies. What measures does your party intend to put in place to ensure clear government leadership, better coordination and greater predictability for industry stakeholders?

Our leader, Charles Milliard, has made access to housing a priority issue, and he will fully exercise his leadership when he becomes premier.

To reach the ambitious targets needed to properly house Quebecers, we must ensure better coordination between the government, municipalities and construction stakeholders.

Among other things, we will create a Quebec housing observatory to provide a shared, up-to-date picture of the market and base decisions on better data. We will also introduce performance targets for permit issuance, maximum timelines for government authorizations and much more predictable planning of the infrastructure needed for development.

This predictability will also depend on municipal infrastructure being in good condition. We are also proposing to raise its share of the Quebec Infrastructure Plan from 4.4% to 8% during a first mandate, and then to maintain that proportion permanently. This will allow municipalities to keep growing rather than having to impose moratoriums on construction.

Construction costs

03 What does your party propose to reduce the construction costs of projects?

Our approach is first to act on what needlessly increases the cost of a project: delays, regulation, a lack of construction capacity and labour shortages.

In particular, we are proposing a rule to remove two administrative requirements for every new requirement introduced, maximum response times within the public administration, and faster issuance of permits and authorizations.

We also want to increase the industry's productivity through the use of prefabrication, notably by aiming for 50% of units in SHQ-funded projects to be built using prefabricated construction. We also want to increase the share of prefabrication in public infrastructure. We will also mandate IQ to develop a stronger and more diversified entrepreneurial ecosystem to increase competition in the construction sector.

Finally, we will update vocational training programs and expand the range of short training programs in the construction trades where labour demand is highest.

04 How do you plan to stimulate businesses' interest in public procurement and thereby increase competition for public contracts?

We want to make public procurement more accessible, particularly for SMEs.

Our proposal calls for simplifying calls for tenders and specifications, streamlining bidding and compliance processes, reducing response times and continuing to digitize procedures. We also want to give greater weight to the quality and value of the proposed solutions rather than systematically limiting ourselves to the lowest compliant bidder model.

Finally, we will put in place a 30-day prompt payment framework for businesses dealing with ministries, agencies and Crown corporations.

Payment delays

05 How does your party intend to ensure that the prompt payment regulation comes into force for municipalities, and on what timeline?

We support the principle of prompt payment in public contracts. We have already committed to putting in place a 30-day payment framework for businesses dealing with ministries, agencies and Crown corporations.

A business that properly carries out a public contract should not have to finance its client's administrative delays. Implementing the regime that applies to municipal bodies follows the same logic of predictability and protecting businesses' cash flow. We will work with the municipal sector and the industry to develop, together with them, an effective and consistent application of the prompt payment principle.

Regulatory relief

06 What measures does your party propose to ease the administrative burden on construction contractors?

We want to tangibly reduce the time contractors spend on paperwork rather than on their projects.

A Liberal government will impose a moratorium on any new regulation that increases the administrative burden on businesses, apply a rule removing two requirements for every new requirement introduced and set maximum response times for ministries and agencies.

In the construction sector, this will be in addition to measures specifically aimed at reducing permit and authorization timelines. The goal is to keep the rules needed for safety, quality and the public interest, while eliminating duplication and steps that add no value.

07 How would your future government apply a regulatory simplification approach, such as the "two-for-one" principle, to reduce the burden on real estate projects?

We have specifically committed to introducing a "two-for-one" rule for administrative requirements: for every new requirement introduced, two will have to be removed. In the real estate sector, this approach will make it possible to review the build-up of procedures, forms and administrative requirements and to identify those that can be simplified, harmonized or eliminated. The aim is not to weaken the standards needed for construction safety or quality, but to prevent the accumulation of regulations from needlessly slowing projects down and increasing their costs.

Building permit processing times

08 What do you plan to do to reduce building permit processing times?

We will put in place a performance-based approach in partnership with municipalities to speed up the issuance of residential permits. Additional levers will be granted to high-performing municipalities, while those with longer timelines will receive support to reduce them. When an authorization falls directly under the Quebec government, we will also impose a maximum processing time. The goal is to make timelines shorter, but also more predictable for developers, contractors and municipalities.

09 How does your future government intend to reform public consultation and referendum approval processes to help residential projects move forward?

Citizen participation remains important to ensure the quality and acceptability of projects, but consultations must not become a series of redundant procedures that make projects consistent with municipal planning unpredictable.

Our government will therefore work with municipalities to make these processes simpler, more predictable and more efficient, while maintaining a real opportunity for citizens to be heard. This will be part of our overall direction to reduce the delays, duplication and administrative burden currently slowing down construction. We will also offer additional levers to high-performing municipalities, which will encourage them to reduce permit processing times.

Housing

10 How does your party commit to increasing investment in municipal infrastructure to support residential development?

We have made a very clear commitment: to raise the share devoted to municipal infrastructure in the Quebec Infrastructure Plan from 4.4% to 8% during a first mandate, and then to maintain that proportion permanently.

We are also proposing to increase the QIP to \$195 billion over ten years starting in 2027 and to extend its planning horizon to 25 years. For water infrastructure, we also want to allow for better long-term planning and to simplify municipal funding programs. The goal is to avoid authorizing residential development without giving municipalities the capacity to provide the infrastructure needed to accommodate it.

11 What concrete commitment is your party prepared to make to accelerate residential construction during the next mandate, and how will you measure the results?

Our goal is to create the conditions that will eventually allow Quebec to build 100,000 housing units a year. To achieve this, we will act simultaneously on permits, municipal infrastructure, labour, prefabrication, investment and regulation.

Results can be tracked using concrete indicators: trends in housing starts and units delivered, authorization timelines, construction capacity and progress in social and affordable housing. Creating a Quebec housing observatory will also strengthen data monitoring and needs assessment.

Renovation of the rental housing stock

12 What does your party intend to do to simplify access to assistance programs and accelerate the renovation of the existing rental housing stock?

We want government programs to be simpler to understand, more predictable and easier to access. Landlords who want to maintain, improve or adapt their buildings should not be discouraged by an accumulation of forms, intermediaries and administrative delays. Our overall plan to modernize the state calls for fewer intermediaries, more automated processes and a culture of continuous service improvement.

Our regulatory relief policy also includes the two-for-one principle and maximum response times. These principles will have to guide the simplification of programs related to housing and to the renovation of the existing stock.

Taxes and levies

13 What measures does your party propose to reduce the tax gap with neighbouring provinces and lower the cost of real estate projects?

We have committed to reducing the weight of the QST on the purchase of new homes. A Liberal government will refund 36% of the QST paid on a new house or condo, up to \$10,000, for eligible properties valued at up to \$500,000. For owner-occupied plexes, the refund could reach \$30,000, depending on the number of units.

We have also committed to reducing the general corporate tax rate for SMEs from 11.5% to 10%. This measure will certainly have a direct financial impact on businesses in the construction sector. In addition, we are proposing an exemption from contributions to the Health Services Fund (HSF) on the first \$500,000 of wages paid.

We also want to stimulate investment in the construction of new housing by allowing Quebec real estate investors to defer tax on their capital gains when they reinvest their profits in construction, up to \$1 million.

These measures reflect our desire to improve the economic conditions for carrying out projects and to increase the supply of housing.

Health and safety representative (RSS)

14 Does your party commit to abolishing this position?

The health and safety of workers on job sites must remain a priority. However, we are open to reviewing, with industry and worker representatives, duplication of roles, implementation difficulties and regulatory costs when they provide no demonstrated additional safety benefit. Our approach will therefore be to seek the best balance between rigorous protection of workers and a clear, efficient allocation of responsibilities that is adapted to the realities of job sites.

Trade versatility

15 What does your party propose regarding the trades in the construction industry?

The priority is to have enough qualified workers and to keep skills in step with the realities of job sites. We have committed to updating vocational training programs in the construction industry so that future graduates master current practices, and to expanding COUD short training programs to trades in high demand.

More broadly, we want to foster an organization of training and work that is agile enough to respond to the industry's changing needs, while maintaining the competency and safety requirements needed on job sites.

Updating training programs

16 What does your party propose to promote training pathways in the construction industry?

Building more first requires training more workers. Young people must also be able to see the construction trades as skilled, modern careers offering attractive prospects everywhere in Quebec.

We will therefore update vocational training programs to better align them with the industry's actual practices, and we will expand COUD short training programs to the construction trades where needs are greatest. The goal is to bring training closer to the needs of employers and job sites, and to offer pathways that allow workers to enter the sectors with the greatest needs more quickly.

17 How do you plan to improve training programs in the construction industry?

We have specifically committed to updating vocational training programs in the construction industry so that future graduates are familiar with the industry's new practices. We want to prevent programs from evolving much more slowly than the methods, technologies, materials and practices used on job sites.

We will also expand COUD short training programs to trades in high demand. More broadly, we want to bring vocational training closer to the workplace so that the skills taught match the industry's real needs and can evolve more quickly along with it. These issues should also be open for discussion at our Estates General on education.

About the organizations

Association de la construction du Québec (ACQ)

The leading organization promoting and defending the interests of contractors in Quebec's construction industry, the Association de la construction du Québec (ACQ) is the largest multi-sector, voluntary-membership association in the industry. Under Act R-20, the ACQ is the employer bargaining agent for all employers in the institutional, commercial and industrial (ICI) sectors. The ACQ represents more than 20,000 businesses that generate over 64% of the total hours worked and reported in the industry. It is also active in the residential sector, notably because hours worked on the construction of new residential buildings of more than six storeys are counted in the commercial sector, and through its subsidiary ACQ-Résidentiel. With a network of 10 regional associations located in 17 cities across Quebec, it offers its members a wide range of tools and services.

Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec (APCHQ)

Founded in 1961, the Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec (APCHQ) is a private non-profit organization that, through its network and regional associations, represents and supports more than 28,000 businesses in the residential construction and renovation industry. Since 1995, it has been the employer representative mandated to negotiate the collective agreement on behalf of employers in the residential construction sector. The APCHQ's mission is to be a unifying agent of change for the benefit of Quebec society, and it acts as a driver of social and economic development by promoting sustainability and quality in housing.

Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec (CORPIQ)

A non-profit organization bringing together 30,000 landlords and property managers who own nearly 600,000 rental units and condos, the Corporation des propriétaires immobiliers du Québec (CORPIQ) has been the largest association providing services to residential landlords and defending their interests for more than 40 years. It serves every region from four offices with a total of 60 employees. Quebec landlords provide housing to 1.4 million tenant households and, in seven out of ten cases, own a duplex or triplex.

Institut de développement urbain du Québec (IDU)

Founded in 1987, the Institut de développement urbain du Québec (IDU) is an independent non-profit organization. The IDU is the largest representative of the commercial real estate industry in Quebec. The IDU produces content on real estate and the urban fabric. It acts primarily as a partner between industry members, public authorities and all stakeholders in the commercial real estate ecosystem. The commercial real estate industry contributes more than \$20 billion annually to Quebec's GDP and more than \$5 billion in tax revenue for governments and municipalities. For Quebec's seven largest cities, it accounts on average for nearly half, or 45.8%, of their total property tax revenue. With combined spending of more than \$24.5 billion, it supports close to one hundred thousand jobs.