



PARKBRIDGE LIFESTYLE COMMUNITIES

Community is at the heart of who we are at Parkbridge. Together with our homeowners and municipal partners, we share a passionate belief in the value of building vibrant communities.

As a global housing award-winner and Canada's leading developer and owner-operator of residential land lease communities, Parkbridge has expertise unparalleled in Canada. Our affordable approach to homeownership is unique because it allows people to own a home, without buying the land – known as 'land lease.'

Improving Fairness and Sustainability for Ontario's Land Lease Homeowners and Communities

Bill 184 – Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Land lease communities are an important housing choice in Ontario, offering an affordable homeownership option for downsizing retirees, first-time homebuyers and young families.

Land lease is a form of homeownership, not rental housing. As homeowners pay lease fees for the sites where their homes are located, land lease communities are governed by special provisions under the *Residential Tenancies Act* that reflect the unique circumstances of land lease communities.

Along with our homeowners, Parkbridge welcomes Bill 184's common sense changes which recognize the unique characteristics of land lease communities, clarify the rights and responsibilities of community owners and residents, and protect the hard-earned equity of homeowners.

The measured changes in Bill 184 demonstrate respect for land lease homeowners across the province, and will encourage the continuing development of land lease as an attainable homeownership option for tens of thousands of Ontarians.

Protecting homeowner interests

Bill 184 includes a new regulation-making authority to exclude some costs paid by land lease homeowners from the definition of rent. Since the early 1990s, our communities are made up of fixed homes largely indistinguishable from freehold homes and include amenities and services that residents have long paid for through separate maintenance fees. Like other homeowners, these residents also pay their own household utility bills, like sub-metered hydro and water, as well as property taxes.

Without any distinction for land lease, the previous government's changes to the RTA captured these charges under rent control. This is significantly impacting our ability to continue providing services like lawn mowing and driveway shovelling that our homeowners value, as well as the flexibility to enhance and improve recreational facilities and services in response to homeowner requests.

Bill 184's changes will allow for new regulations that exempt such costs from rent control. At the same time, rent control will still apply to lease fees – the closest thing to “rent” that our homeowners pay.

Ensuring the health & safety of communities

Bill 184 provides a common-sense solution to unreasonable restrictions on land lease community operators seeking Above-Guideline Increases (AGIs) to fund major capital improvements. Our homeowners rely on community infrastructure maintained and operated by Parkbridge, including drinking water systems, sewer facilities and roads. Over time, this privately-owned infrastructure will need to be replaced, and AGIs are necessary to help manage the costs of these expensive but vital infrastructure projects.

Unlike traditional landlords, land lease community operators are extremely restricted in our ability to apply for an AGI. In many instances, infrastructure upgrades only become eligible for an AGI if there is a government order to replace the infrastructure. Bill 184 resolves this by eliminating the requirement for a government order for infrastructure work to justify seeking an AGI. This means that we don't have to wait until the health and safety of our homeowners is at risk before we can move forward with critical repairs and apply for AGIs to pay for them. We also look forward to working with the province on regulations to ensure that the AGI is linked to the site, like in rental housing, not the individual homeowner.