

CAPITAL INSIGHTS ON RENTAL HOUSING, DELIVERED FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL



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This year's Rental Housing Canada Conference, held this past May in Ottawa, was a veritable treasure trove for anyone in the rental housing industry. Spanning three full days, the conference was packed with product and service ideas from local developers, insights from industry experts, analyses of various markets, and predictions as to where the industry as a whole may be headed. It was also a great opportunity to catch up and network with industry colleagues.

A tale of three communities

The ever-popular building tour led attendees through three different communities.

Our first stop was Minto's **88 Beechwood**, where 12 neglected legacy walk-ups were purchased and demolished in 2021 and replaced with 227 completed units by June 2024. The building's suite mix is 8% studios, 50% one-bedroom, and 42% two-bedroom or two-bedrooms plus den, with higher floors enjoying upgraded finishes such as heated ensuite bathroom flooring. While Beechwood's finished product was quite impressive, the backstory was equally so. Though the City of Ottawa does not require builders to create "replacement suites" for displaced tenants, Minto staff went a step further by working with social service providers to create a robust relocation program for all legacy residents impacted.

At **Relevé** by Centurion, we toured the two curvy towers [23 and 29 storeys] located just a block from the Ottawa LRT station. Here, the 567 suites situated atop convenient ground-floor retail share amenities that are expansive and impressive: an outdoor infinity pool, a fitness with TRX room, a karaoke room, a golf simulator, a co-working space, a BBQ area with multiple outdoor covered lounges, and several guest suites. 10% of the inventory is designated "affordable," and short-term rentals are available. As an incentive for longer-term prospects, up to three months' rent is being offered on two-year lease terms.



Relevé I and II



360 Laurier West lobby

Finally, at **360 Laurier West** by CLV Group, we toured some incredibly unique floor plan designs. The original building was converted from office to residential use, so the architects had to get creative while working within a fixed floor template. Hats off to Andrew Reeves, Principal Architect at Linebox Studio: his team created 139 units over 11 storeys [studios, one-, and two-bedrooms]. The construction began in 2024 and was completed in late 2025 – about half the time it takes to build from scratch. The finished building features the usual variety of amenities along with some thoughtful additions: an outdoor dog run, a hobby room, and on-site auto sharing. Two bicycles were parked in the lobby, available for any resident to borrow. Both the Concierge desk and the Leasing Agent desk were conveniently located in the open lobby – not only as a convenience to residents but also so that the two “service” positions could easily spell each other off when one stepped away.

What’s hot and what’s not in 2026

Storage lockers are hot. Infrequently used yoga rooms are not. Co-work spaces are hot and always booked. Dog runs, bike-sharing, and video intercom consoles are hot [especially with facial recognition feature]. Interestingly, 24/7 concierges are not.



Great Canadian Apartment Superstars

Tips to draw in new residents and help keep current ones happy

At the Great Canadian Apartment Superstars session, Virginia Love of Entrata shared that the vast majority of entrepreneurs who get deals on the Shark Tank enter smiling and waving. She suggested having leasing agents do the same as a way to help close the deal!

Superstar Jose Rivera of CAPREIT showed landlords how to enlist their residents [via contests] to beef up content on reviews. CAPREIT residents often create their own building events by offering their expertise to their neighbours [such as bike repair sessions].

Virginia suggested a “cool” idea to use when touring prospects in the heat of summer: instead of giving the prospect an ice cream treat in the office, give them an entire tub of ice cream from a local creamery. That way, they will go directly home without visiting other properties so that their ice cream doesn’t melt!

From Superstar Renee Bourgon: Leasing agents should change up their tours to keep them fresh. Start from a different point than you would ordinarily, on every other tour. This will get you off “autopilot.”

Brooklyn Lewandowski reminded everyone to e-shop their building. Start with the website and test every link to ensure the messaging is up to date. Walk through every step as if you were a prospect.

Ian Longo shared some low-budget resident programs/ events such as a walking club or simply promoting other groups’ events in your neighbourhood. It’s a great way for residents to build community and even spread the word about the great building they live in!

Think about attending next year’s RHC conference in Toronto. Planning is underway, and dates will be confirmed soon. It’s a fun way to get inspired by the country’s best in the rental housing sector!