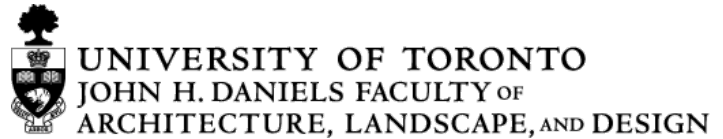


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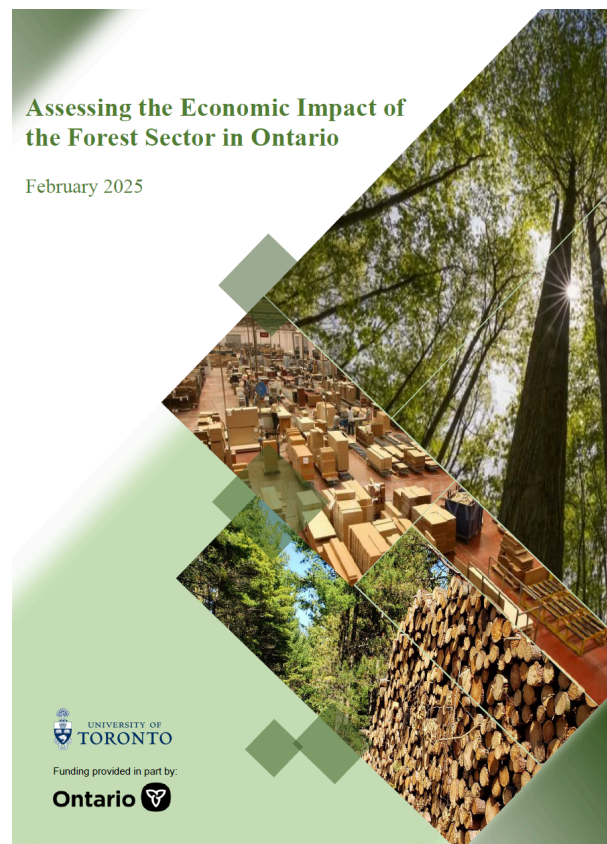
News from MTI

Hello Mass Timber Colleagues!

Feature: Assessing the Economic Impact of the Forest Sector in Ontario

The Forest Economy and Decision Support Systems Lab at the University of Toronto in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources has produced an [economic impact assessment report](#) about Ontario's forest sector. The report was produced under the leadership of Rasoul Yousefpour, professor and director of MTI.

The assessment catalogues economic output of forest industry subsectors. It also highlights that the impact of the forest industry extends beyond direct forestry activities, creating jobs in a "spinoff effect" within repair construction, building material wholesalers, and more. MTI editor Sanjana Patel discussed the report with Rasoul Yousefpour.



Sanjana Patel (SP): What was the intended outcome of conducting a study on the economic impact of Ontario's forest sector?

Rasoul Yousefpour (RY): The primary goal was to quantify the forest sector's contribution to Ontario's economy and provide evidence-based insights to guide policy and investment decisions. The intended outcome is to bridge knowledge and policy, enabling smarter decisions on sustainable forest resource use.

SP: How might the impact of the forest sector evolve in the near future?

RY: Ontario's forest-sector impact is likely to grow in strategic importance and will likely be more innovation-driven, carbon-relevant, and value-added, rather than simply volume-driven. Reflecting on the new economic challenges e.g. Mill closures and Tariffs will illustrate the importance of the sector in future studies.

To learn more, see the [full report](#) on the MTI website.

Feature: The Cost & Carbon of Canadian Commercial Construction

The *Cost & Carbon of Canadian Commercial Construction* study, led by the Mass Timber Institute in collaboration with Ha/f Climate Design, Entuitive, and Bird Construction, evaluates the cost and embodied carbon performance of four structural systems - reinforced concrete, structural steel, mass timber, and timber-hybrid - across three Canadian markets, Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. Using schematic design, life cycle assessment, and cost estimating, the report shows that mass timber can be both cost-competitive and lower carbon, particularly when schedule efficiencies are factored in, and offers clear data to support cost-and-carbon-informed decision making in commercial construction.

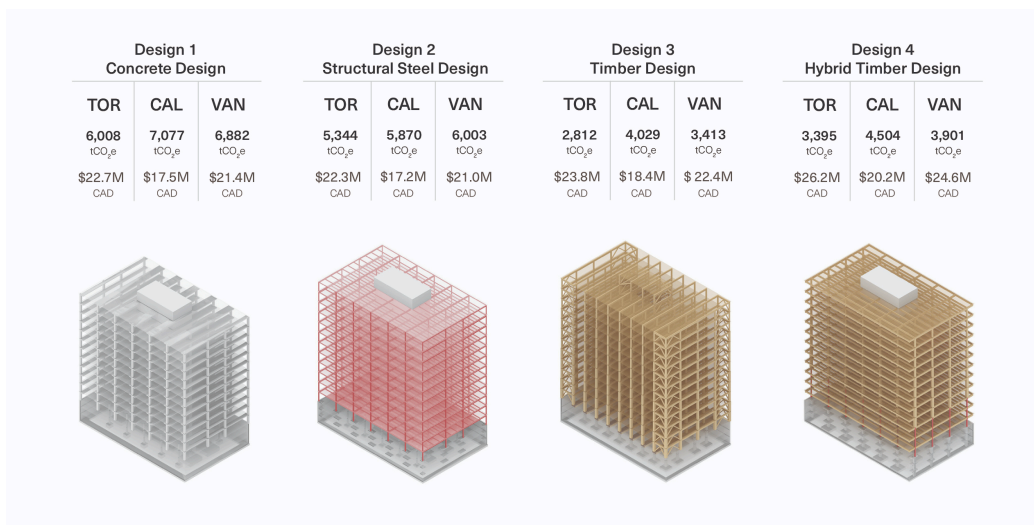


Image: Diagram showing the typical commercial building framed in 4 types of structural systems, with overall cost and carbon impact of each system. Image Credit: Ha/f Climate Design

MTI Editor Sanjana Patel discussed the report with Kelly Doran, co-founder of Ha/f Climate Design.

Sanjana Patel (SP): The report briefly outlines why commercial construction is a focus. Were there other topics being considered before this was selected that you may be considering for future reports?

Kelly Doran (KD): Yes, while commercial construction was a natural first focus due to its scale, repeatability, and carbon intensity, other sectors were under consideration - in particular housing. Commercial buildings offered a clear opportunity to explore a variety of structural systems in a relatively consistent form, making them ideal for benchmarking. Looking ahead, we'd be very interested in expanding this work to address mid-rise residential construction, and integrated site and landscape carbon strategies. There's also growing interest in connecting cost and carbon at the portfolio scale, helping developers and institutions assess impact across multiple sites. Ultimately, our aim is to continue providing insight developing tools that inform early design and procurement decisions wherever they can drive meaningful reductions in whole-life carbon.

SP: What are some common/interesting questions you've received about LCA, and LCA studies such as this report?

KD: There are a lot of headwinds around the environmental performance of buildings at the moment. Worldwide there is a misconception that the lower carbon project is

inherently more expensive, and that perception is leading to a rollback of requirements in Ontario and beyond. The question that these assumptions typically ask is "but isn't the lower-carbon building going to cost more?" The reality is that a lower-carbon building is also less expensive to build and operate. Buildings that use designed to be more structurally efficient use less materials, emit less, go up faster, and cost less - this report underlines that fact.

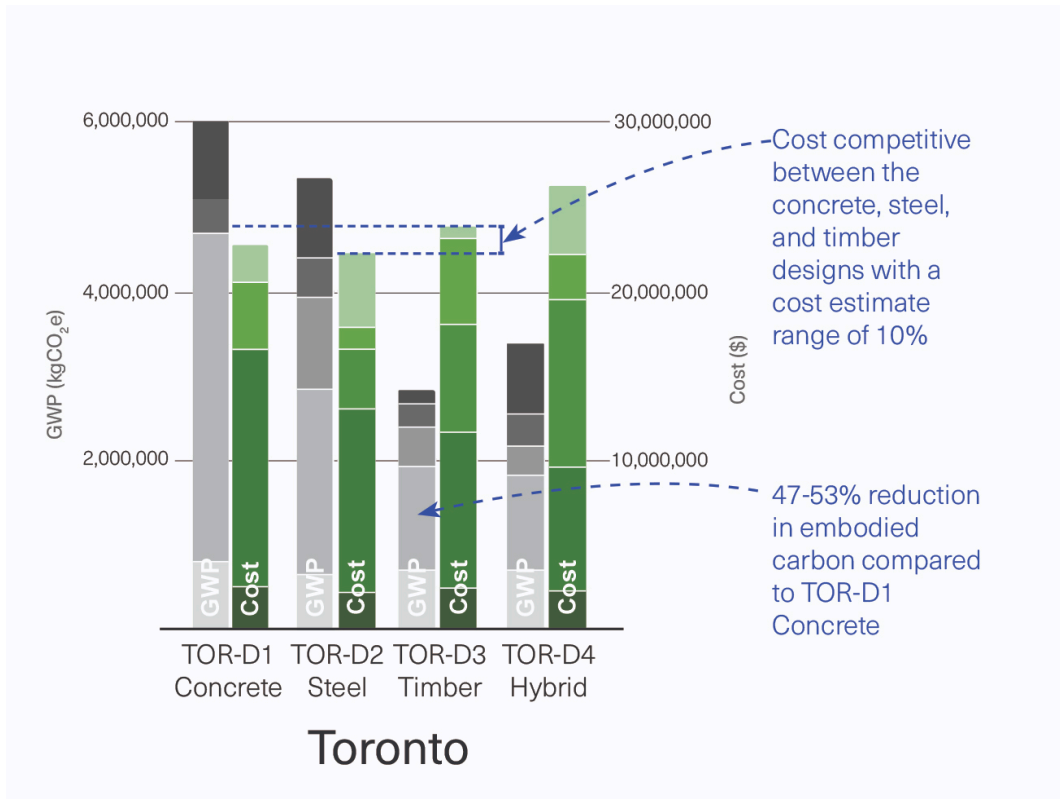


Image: Bar chart comparing the cost and carbon impact of 4 structural system types in the Toronto context. Image Credit: Ha/f Climate Design

KD: Buildings that have higher performance envelopes and building systems pay-off in the near-to-mid term of a building's life and provide paybacks to the owners or occupants financially, as well as improved resiliency.

We, environmental advocates in the built environment, need to do a much better job of making the business case for these requirements. LCA's combined with Cost Estimates, projected over the whole life of the project are a critical component of making the case, and building an evidence base to inform future policy and regulations around. Studies like this one that bring designers, engineers, and contractors together to shed light on the benefits of lower-carbon construction are necessary to create and disseminate that evidence base.

Other Updates

- 4 US school projects will receive funding for construction from winning the 2025 Mass Timber Competition: Building Sustainable Schools. The competition is funded by the USDA and Softwood Lumber Board. [Read more here.](#)
- The David Rubenstein Treehouse, Harvard University's new mass timber building, is now complete. [Read more here.](#)
- University of Toronto's recently completed research facility in King Township features a mass timber structure, on-site energy generation, and a design inspired by the interplay between micro and macro systems. [Read more here.](#)
- [Read about the new The Boreal Springboard Initiative](#), which aims to diversify Northwestern Ontario's forest industry.

Mass Timber Institute Website



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