Building Tomorrow’s Infrastructure Now

Infrastructure investments stimulate economic growth and create jobs today, while supporting future jobs and helping people in their everyday lives. That is why in this Budget the government is investing more than $137 billion over the next 10 years, in public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, public transit, hospitals and schools. This builds on previous commitments, resulting in about $160 billion to public infrastructure investments over 12 years, starting in 2014–15. This is the largest investment in public infrastructure in the province’s history. Planned investments would support more than 110,000 jobs, on average, each year.

Moving Ontario Forward

The government’s Moving Ontario Forward plan will support public transit, transportation and priority infrastructure, using dedicated funds of $31.5 billion. About $15 billion is available outside the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and about $16 billion is available within the GTHA. Supported by its asset optimization strategy, the government is building the infrastructure that is needed today and tomorrow. These investments will help manage congestion, connect people, and improve the economy and Ontarians’ quality of life.
Outside the GTHA

The Province continues to invest in the infrastructure that communities need now and in the future.

- The 2016 Budget invests in new highway projects and expands the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) to $300 million per year by 2018–19 to support projects in small, rural and northern communities.

- Through the Small Communities Fund, the Province and the federal government are each providing $272 million to support projects in communities with populations of less than 100,000.

- The Province is also developing programs to help communities partner with utilities to extend access to natural gas supplies. Ontario will introduce a loan program to support access to natural gas in 2016.

- The Connecting Links program will provide $20 million in 2016–17, up from $15 million announced in the 2015 Budget, to help municipalities pay the construction and repair costs for municipal roads that connect two ends of a provincial highway through a community or to a border crossing. Funding for this program will increase to $30 million per year by 2018–19.

- The Ring of Fire project will support economic development in northern Ontario, benefiting Indigenous communities, Ontario and Canada as a whole. The Province has committed up to $1 billion for transportation infrastructure development in the region.

- The Province also continues infrastructure planning with First Nations. Ontario and the federal government jointly funded a community-based study of all-season access roads, and the Province is also providing funding to First Nation communities for social supports.

- The Province will continue working with regions, communities, other levels of government, and private partners to design and select the next generation of infrastructure investments that will improve the competitiveness of Ontario’s communities, enhance productivity, promote innovation and develop new economic opportunities, such as:
  - Subject to agreement with freight rail partners, two-way, all-day rail services on the Kitchener and Milton GO corridors, and extension of GO rail service to Niagara and Bowmanville;
  - New and improved GO bus connections to the GO rail network for communities such as Brantford and Cambridge; and
  - Cost-sharing the capital costs of municipal transit projects such as London rapid transit and Phase 2 of the Ottawa light rail transit (LRT) project.

- The Province is investing in a number of ongoing and additional transportation projects, including:
  - Advancing work on four-lane alignment on Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph;
  - Working with the City of London on the final design to upgrade the interchange at Highway 401 and Highbury Avenue, with construction beginning in 2017;
  - Improving the Highway 417 corridor in Ottawa, with construction beginning in 2016;
  - Widening nine kilometres of County Road 17 in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, beginning in 2019;
  - Capital improvements to northern airports to support remote and Indigenous communities and promote economic development; and
Continuing construction of a four-lane divided Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon that will support a strategic link in the Trans-Canada Highway system.

Inside the GTHA
The Province continues to build priority transit projects to increase ridership and reduce travel times.

Through Moving Ontario Forward, the government will invest $13.5 billion to implement GO Regional Express Rail (RER), which will quadruple the number of weekly trips to nearly 6,000.

As a first step to phasing in GO RER, Metrolinx is continuing to implement short-term service improvements that will result in new travel options across the seven corridors of the GO rail network. In 2016–17, planned network-wide GO rail service improvements include the addition of up to:

- Six new trips during the morning/afternoon commutes (i.e., peak trips) on the Milton, Richmond Hill and Stouffville corridors;
- 10 new trips during midday/evening (i.e., off-peak) on the Kitchener corridor to/from the City of Brampton; and
- 52 new trips on each weekend day (i.e., a typical Saturday) on the Kitchener corridor to/from the City of Brampton and the Barrie corridor to/from Aurora.

By 2020, rail service on the GO Transit network will increase by about 50 per cent over 2014–15 levels.

In 2016–17, planned GO bus service improvements will increase the number of bus trips by 130 per week.

Other public transit projects include:

- **Hurontario LRT** — investing $1.4 billion to cover the capital construction costs of this LRT line in Peel Region that will bring approximately 20 kilometres of new, modern, reliable rapid transit to Mississauga and southern Brampton. Construction is expected to start in 2018 and the LRT will be in service in 2022.

- **Hamilton LRT** — covering the capital costs of building the LRT, up to $1 billion, offering speedy service from McMaster University through downtown Hamilton to Queenston Traffic Circle. The environmental assessment process is expected to be completed in early 2017, construction will start in 2019, and the LRT will be in service by 2024.

- Planning and design work for other priority projects included in Metrolinx’s regional transportation plan — The Big Move — to support ongoing transit planning in the region, including Dundas Street Bus Rapid Transit, linking Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville and Burlington; Durham–Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit; Brampton Queen Street Rapid Transit; Toronto Relief Line; and Yonge North subway extension.
Transportation

The Province is creating a reliable and sustainable transportation system in Ontario. Transit investments and major highway infrastructure projects are underway to improve mobility and connectivity across the province.

Highways

- Starting a 16.5-kilometre pilot project as the first step in Ontario’s plan to implement high-occupancy toll lanes. The pilot will begin on a section of the Queen Elizabeth Way between Trafalgar Road in Oakville and Guelph Line in Burlington in summer 2016 to help manage congestion and add choice for travellers.

- Widening Highway 400 from eight to 10 lanes, adding a new high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction between Major Mackenzie Drive and King Road. This project is scheduled for completion in 2018–19.

- Helping relieve congestion and support the efficient movement of people and goods in the eastern Greater Toronto Area through the 407 East project. Phase 1, from Brock Road in Pickering to Harmony Road in Oshawa and Highway 412, will open in spring 2016.

- Widening 12 kilometres of Highway 410 from Highway 401 to Queen Street in Brampton. When completed in 2018, Highway 410 will be widened from six to 10 lanes and will provide HOV lanes to help improve traffic flow and commuter traveller choices.

- Investing $550 million in northern infrastructure through the Northern Highways Program. Capital improvements include new passing lanes and the rehabilitation and replacement of bridges, in addition to a four-lane expansion of Highway 69 south of Sudbury and Highway 11/17 east of Thunder Bay. This program also supports continuing rehabilitation of the Noden Causeway near Fort Frances, resurfacing of 36 kilometres of Highway 144 and replacement of the Valentine River Bridge west of Hearst.

- Continuing to enhance winter highway maintenance delivery to keep Ontario’s highways as safe as possible, improve awareness for drivers, and verify contractors are meeting ministry maintenance standards. Planned enhancements in 2016–17 include improved road weather information system stations, increased service by contractors through more frequent road patrolling, more reliable equipment, and expansion of the “Track My Plow” website to enable more Ontarians to track snowplows on provincial highways in their area.

Supporting Municipal Transportation Systems

In addition to Moving Ontario Forward investments, the Province is supporting major projects that are planned and underway, including:

- In 2015, Ontario provided over $330 million in gas tax funding to 95 municipalities to help expand and improve public transit. Municipalities use the funding to enhance accessibility, purchase additional transit vehicles, add more routes and extend hours of service — making it easier for people to use public transit. The program also helps ease traffic congestion and reduce air pollution.
Work is underway for ION, the Region of Waterloo’s 36-kilometre rapid transit project, with about 5.3 kilometres of LRT track in place in Kitchener and Waterloo. The Province will continue to have discussions with the Region on other transit priorities such as a proposed transit hub that could connect ION, Grand River Transit, GO Transit and other intercity bus carriers.

Cycling infrastructure is part of the government’s plan to build up Ontario communities. The Province recognizes the importance of helping communities become more sustainable by building off-road bike paths and large-scale recreational trails through the #CycleON initiative. To continue promoting a healthy Ontario, the Province has created a new streamlined process for municipalities to submit proposals for environmental assessment on trails and paths. Reducing carbon footprints is one of the many benefits of investing in cycling infrastructure.

**Health Care Infrastructure**

Investments in health care infrastructure help patients continue to receive high-quality care in a safe and healthy environment. Ontario plans to provide $12 billion over 10 years in capital grants to hospitals to continue building essential infrastructure. Currently there are about 35 major hospital projects under construction or in various stages of planning across the province.

In addition, the Province is providing new annual funding of $50 million to help hospitals maintain their facilities in good repair. This investment will build on increases announced in the 2014 Budget, to more than triple investments in the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund from pre-2014 levels.

Hospital projects in planning or underway include:

- The new Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital project will improve access to hospital services for York Region. The new hospital will have a state-of-the-art emergency department, modern surgical services, specialized ambulatory clinics and advanced diagnostic imaging. The hospital will have integrated smart digital technology systems to enhance the patient care experience.

- The new Providence Care Hospital in Kingston will consolidate services currently provided at St. Mary’s of the Lake Hospital and Mental Health Services into a 270-bed state-of-the-art facility. The new hospital will include single-occupancy patient rooms with adjacent therapy and treatment spaces to allow patients to receive care closer to their rooms, and will maximize the use of technology to enhance care and improve operating efficiency.

- A renovation of acute and long-term care beds at the Atikokan General Hospital will help better coordinate provision of care across levels of service delivery.
Child Care and Education

Over 10 years, the Province plans to provide more than $11 billion in capital grants to school boards to help build new schools in areas of high growth, reduce surplus space through school consolidations, and improve the condition of existing facilities.

Ontario is also investing in child care by creating almost 4,000 new licensed spaces in local schools to give children the opportunity to transition more easily into full-day kindergarten.

As of winter 2016, approximately 200 major capital school projects are either being planned or underway across Ontario, including projects that incorporate a community hub model. Examples of projects include:

- $8 million to retrofit Alexander Henry High School in Sault Ste. Marie into a new JK–8 school that will accommodate local enrolment pressures and partner with the municipality to include a public library to create a community hub;
- $9 million to consolidate two schools into a new Greensville Public School in Hamilton that will partner with the municipality to include community space, a public library and 39 child care spaces; and
- $13 million to construct a new École Secondaire Gaétan-Gervais in Oakville, creating a recreation hub in partnership with the Town of Oakville and the neighbouring English public school board.

Postsecondary Education Infrastructure

Ontario is committed to developing a sustainable, transparent, student-centred postsecondary sector, where students have access to high-quality programs closer to home and where Ontario’s investments contribute to building a strong economy. The Province plans to provide $3 billion in capital grants to postsecondary institutions over 10 years.

- In May 2015, the government announced plans for a new postsecondary campus in Markham for about 4,000 students. The project will be a partnership between York University and Seneca College.
- In 2016, Ontario will issue a second targeted call for proposals to serve the growing demand in Peel and Halton Regions and support creating good jobs and building Ontario’s economy.
- In addition to the new campus in York and any future campus in Halton/Peel, the Province is funding new capital projects such as:
  - **Confederation College in Thunder Bay** — A new technology, education and collaboration hub will bring together preparatory, apprenticeship, training, trades and technology programs, providing an array of instruction, innovation and incubation facilities.
  - **La Cité collégiale in Ottawa** — New interdisciplinary creativity incubators will create experiential learning space and help build a culture of innovation for francophones to meet the emerging needs of the labour market.