



# VOTE PROSPERITY

THE 2018 ELECTION  
PLATFORM OF THE ONTARIO  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# ABOUT THE ONTARIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

For more than a century, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) has been the independent, non-partisan voice of Ontario business. Our mission is to support economic growth in Ontario by defending business priorities at Queen's Park on behalf of our network's diverse 60,000 members.

From innovative SMEs to established multi-national corporations and industry associations, the OCC is committed to working with our members to improve business competitiveness across all sectors. We represent local chambers of commerce and boards of trade in over 135 communities across Ontario, steering public policy conversations provincially and within local communities. Through our focused programs and services, we enable companies to grow at home and in export markets.

The OCC provides exclusive support, networking opportunities and access to policy insight and analysis to our members. We also work alongside the Government of Ontario on the delivery of multiple programs, and leverage our network to connect the business community to public initiatives relevant to their needs.



The OCC is Ontario's business advocate.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is Ontario’s business advocate, representing 135 chambers of commerce and boards of trade across the province. Our mission is to support economic growth by promoting business priorities at Queen’s Park on behalf of our network’s 60,000 diverse members.

Through consultation with those members, the OCC has developed *Vote Prosperity*, a platform for the 2018 provincial election campaign. This product is designed to provide Ontario with a strategy to leverage our advantages and strengthen our global competitiveness.

Ontario is a great place to live and work, but the foundation of our prosperity is shifting. Through extensive research, we have identified several factors that limit business growth in the province, from lacklustre exports to an elevated cost of living to decreased labour force participation. These factors, coupled with high input costs such as rising electricity prices, a cap and trade regime, onerous labour law reforms and a burdensome regulatory environment, mean the cost of doing business in Ontario is high relative to our competitor jurisdictions.

Ontario businesses are the backbone of our economy and our communities. To ensure the next provincial election addresses the most important issues to their survival, *Vote Prosperity* reflects four fundamental pillars of a strong Ontario:

- Strengthening Business Competitiveness
- Fostering Job Creation
- Building Healthy Communities
- Improving Government Accountability

Within these four pillars, we have identified a total of 18 policy recommendations that will help bolster Ontario’s long-term economic outcomes, while also addressing the pressing issues of today.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

PILLAR	RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>1. Strengthening Business Competitiveness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow Ontario businesses to purchase surplus electricity at rates equal to or better than the exported price to other jurisdictions.</li> <li>2. Conduct and publish the results of a comprehensive review of the electricity sector, including an objective economic impact analysis assessing the full range of inputs that make up the Global Adjustment (GA), and then pursue cost-reducing measures based on the results.</li> <li>3. Regardless of public policy approach chosen, pursue efforts to reduce Ontario’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in a manner that effectively mitigates risk to business competitiveness.</li> <li>4. Work with federal and local levels of government to establish a publicly available analysis of the cost of doing business (CODB) in Ontario.</li> <li>5. Reinstate scheduled reductions in the Corporate Income Tax, standardize the Business Education Tax and reduce the Employer Health Tax.</li> </ol>
<b>2. Fostering Job Creation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Modernize the apprenticeship system.</li> <li>2. Redesign Employment Ontario services for both job-seekers and employers and evaluate the potential of an outcomes-based funding model.</li> <li>3. Work with industry and post-secondary institutions to ensure that program offerings remain responsive to the changing labour market dynamics and the regional and sectoral needs of Ontario’s business community.</li> <li>4. Allocate resources to focus support on high growth firms and those with high growth potential, by delaying taxation on corporate income growth to overcome Ontario’s scale-up challenge.</li> </ol>
<b>3. Building Healthy Communities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on strategic growth policies by ensuring that land use planning and development regulations are aligned, to increase density and create more housing stock.</li> <li>2. Build adaptable and resilient infrastructure stock that can address future pressures including climate change and demographic shifts.</li> <li>3. Develop a single transportation authority in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA).</li> <li>4. Strike a Health Cabinet to improve information-sharing and break down budget silos between Ministries.</li> <li>5. Reform the procurement and supply chain processes within the Ontario health care system.</li> </ol>
<b>4. Improving Government Accountability</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a meaningful plan to tackle the debt and move towards balanced or surplus budgets.</li> <li>2. Ensure all proposed policy, regulation and legislation has been evaluated against sound, quantitative evidence.</li> <li>3. Establish criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of strategic goals and publicly publish these targets to ensure transparency.</li> <li>4. Provide appropriate timelines to stakeholders when revising or implementing initiatives that will impact their operations.</li> </ol>

# INTRODUCTION

The 2018 Ontario election comes at a pivotal time for the province.

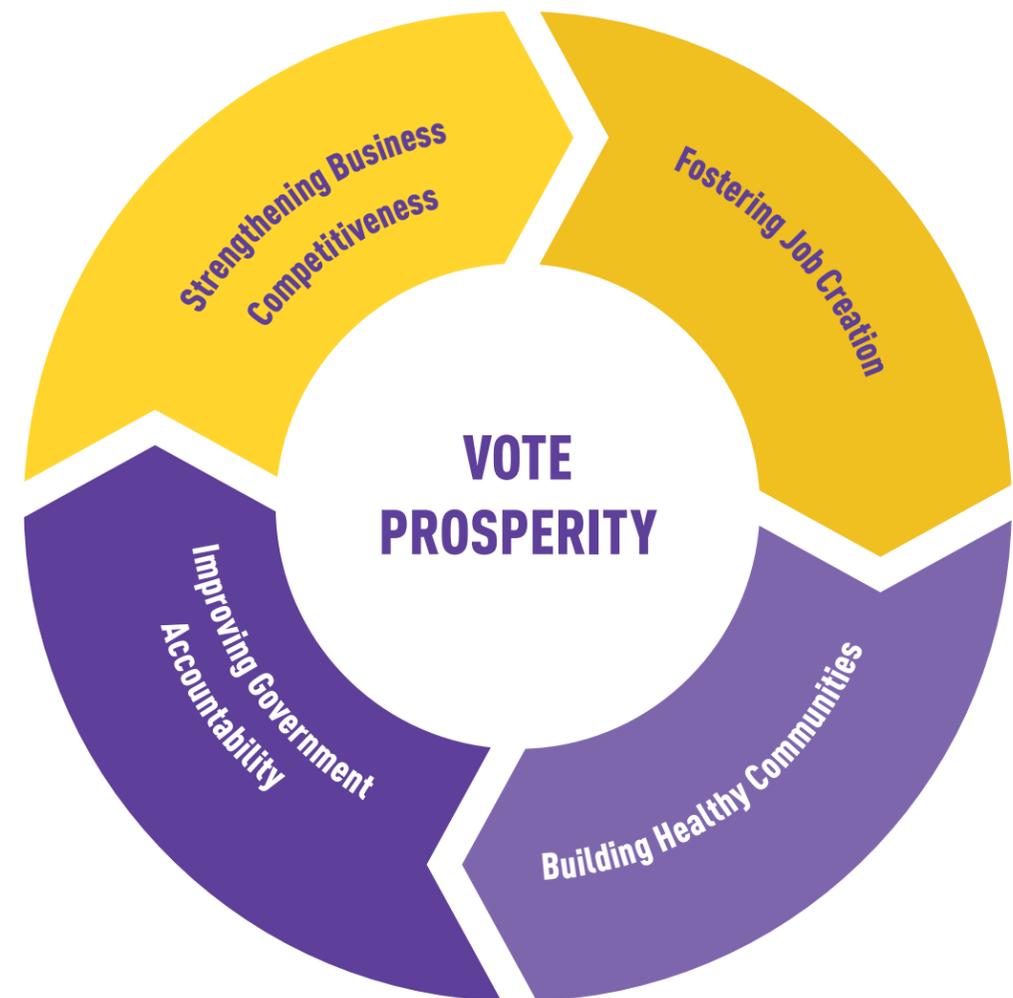
Viewing Ontario's economy from afar, the story appears to be a positive one: Over the 2014-16 period, Ontario's real GDP growth outpaced that of all G7 countries,<sup>1</sup> in August 2017 Ontario's unemployment rate of 6.2 percent was below the national average for the 29th consecutive month<sup>2</sup> and, looking forward, private-sector forecasters project Ontario's real GDP to increase on average by 2.7 percent in 2017.<sup>3</sup>

Beneath these metrics, unfortunately, is a very different reality for Ontario businesses. Our members have made clear the challenge to their prosperity that comes from an ever-rising cost of doing business in this province. High input costs – such as electricity prices, labour and the trickle-down effect of the cap and trade system – alongside the on-going burden of operating in one of the most regulated economies in Canada (with over 380,000 regulations by the province's own count),<sup>4</sup> is a constraint on business' ability to invest in the human and physical capital required for growth. This cumulative regulatory and cost burden poses serious risk to investment, job creation and growth, threatening the prosperity of the entire province. As such, only one quarter of Ontario businesses are confident in Ontario's economic outlook.<sup>5</sup>

With business investment and manufacturing exports chronically weak in recent years, Ontario has been increasingly reliant on housing to sustain economic growth. The soaring price of housing has contributed 29 percent of nominal GDP growth over the past four quarters (1.1 percentage points to nominal GDP growth), well above its 7.8 percent share of GDP in 2015 and historic levels generally.<sup>6</sup> With the upcoming 32 percent increase to the minimum wage, Ontario will soon have a minimum-to-median wage ratio that is higher than all other Canadian provinces, as well as our competitor jurisdictions in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Ontario, once the economic driver of Canada, has been relegated in recent years to "have not" status.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, while our unemployment rate continues to outpace the G7, Statistics Canada attributes this trend primarily to a decline in the number of youth searching for work.<sup>9</sup> The labour force participation rate among those aged 20 to 24 dropped from 79 percent in 2004 to 75.5 percent in April 2017.

Why should Ontarians, and the political parties vying for their votes in 2018, concern themselves with these specific challenges? Ontario has tremendous advantages, but we must seek to further leverage them to ensure our economic prosperity. Industry is the backbone of our economy; a thriving private sector is the most important source of greater living standards and well-being for all. Businesses provide employment opportunities, foster individual well-being, contribute to the development of skills, and promote the creation and dissemination of knowledge and technology. Without these contributions, residents of this province would not enjoy the standard of living we do today.



Ontarians are also troubled by today's economic realities. Over half (57 percent) believe that the next generation will not have a better standard of living as compared to their own.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, only one third think young Ontarians are well prepared for the jobs of the future. They are also more likely to say that the Ontario economy is struggling to change with the times than to say we already are, or are becoming, an economy of the future.<sup>11</sup>

Amidst these concerns, however, Ontario has the potential to leverage its existing strengths and forge a path forward. This will require is all provincial political parties presenting a material plan for re-building confidence in the economy, and a long-term vision for the prosperity of the province.

That vision will require deep thinking on some very difficult questions. As we rapidly move towards a technology-driven knowledge economy, what is our competitive advantage? What is the future source of Ontario's prosperity?

To inspire Ontario's political parties to take up this challenge, the OCC has developed its own election platform, built on four fundamental pillars of prosperity. Together, these pillars represent an aspirational policy strategy for Ontario.

Only bold action and leadership can strengthen Ontario's position in the global economy. We encourage all parties to consider the following recommendations, and all Ontarians to *Vote Prosperity*.



**STRENGTHENING  
BUSINESS  
COMPETITIVENESS**

# CHALLENGES

The most common and acute concern of the business community in Ontario is rising input costs, especially those costs deriving from government regulation and policy. As operating a business becomes more difficult and more expensive, the ability of businesses to compete is limited. Adding to this struggle is the feeling amongst Ontario businesses that politicians, regardless of political stripe, are insensitive to the cumulative financial and regulatory burden imposed by public policy.



## Energy/Electricity Costs

- Ontario's electricity prices have risen by 71 percent from 2008 to 2016, far outpacing electricity price growth in other provinces, as well as increases in income and inflation.<sup>12</sup>



## Regulation and Red Tape

- Overregulation imposes the equivalent of an additional 5 percent to 15 percent import tariff on small businesses compared to larger firms, due to small firms' inability to appropriately navigate the regulatory environment.<sup>13</sup> With 380,000 regulations (by the government's own count), Ontario is the most administered province in the country, harming business competitiveness.<sup>14</sup>



## Cap and Trade

- In Ontario, 32 percent of businesses believe that cap and trade costs in 2017-2018 will have a negative impact on their business, limiting their ability to hire new workers and/or scale up.<sup>15</sup>



## Tax Policy

- Small businesses in Ontario pay the highest tax rate in a comparison of neighbouring jurisdictions.<sup>16</sup>

To learn more about the OCC's work on business competitiveness, see the [Ontario Economic Report](#) and the [Top 3 Obstacles to Small Business Success](#).

# OUR PRIORITIES

To strengthen business competitiveness, the OCC encourages the next government to:

1. **Allow Ontario businesses to purchase surplus electricity at rates equal to or better than the exported price to other jurisdictions.**

While applications presently exist that are designed to identify when surplus electrical energy is being generated in the province (and how much), there is no provision that allows Ontario businesses to purchase surplus electricity before it is exported to other jurisdictions. The Ontario government should develop a process application that would permit local industry to take advantage of those surpluses at rates equal to or better than the exported price, to use for energy storage or to ramp up production to increase productivity.

2. **Conduct and publish the results of a comprehensive review of the electricity sector, including an objective economic impact analysis assessing the full range of inputs that make up the Global Adjustment (GA), and then pursue cost-reducing measures based on the results.**

Ontarians deserve a comprehensive, objective analysis of the drivers behind all electricity system costs, including the GA. Government should then consider approaches to make sustainable change to the electricity market.

3. **Regardless of public policy approach chosen, pursue efforts to reduce Ontario's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in a manner that effectively mitigates risk to business competitiveness.**

Tackling GHG emissions and climate change is critical to the sustainability of our planet. Government-led approaches to reducing Ontario-produced GHGs should come with adequate implementation time for the research and development of new technologies to support the on-going transition to the low-carbon economy, and must include appropriate offsets to safeguard business competitiveness. These could include, but are not limited to, ensuring that exposed industries are supported in the process of developing techniques for meeting emissions targets, and investing in those regional economies that are uniquely impacted by this new economy.

4. **Work with federal and local levels of government to establish a publicly available analysis of the cost of doing business (CODB) in Ontario.**

This analysis should aggregate all government-induced input costs by sector, with the results published publicly.



It would be updated annually to highlight the cumulative impact of any new government policies implemented in the past year or proposed in the year ahead. Importantly, this analysis would be benchmarked against an aggregated CODB metric in comparator jurisdictions.

**5. Reinstate scheduled reductions in the Corporate Income Tax, standardize the Business Education Tax and reduce the Employer Health Tax.**

High tax rates can be a significant consideration for businesses as they decide where to operate or invest. Ontario should reinstate scheduled reductions in the Corporate Income Tax, standardize and reduce the Business Education Tax and reduce the Employer Health Tax to help improve competitiveness and make Ontario an attractive place to open or operate a business.



**FOSTERING  
JOB  
CREATION**

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# CHALLENGES

A robust labour market is essential to the continued global competitiveness of the province. However, when business investment in the province is weak, few jobs are created and workers are unable to gain the experience and training they need to stay relevant in a changing economy.

Industry in Ontario has a high perception of risk in the economy, reducing the incentive to invest in their own or other businesses. This perception, which encourages businesses to keep their assets liquid and flexible rather than re-invested in productive processes (such as new machinery and equipment, or people), has sputtered new job growth.<sup>17</sup>



## Weak Business Investment Climate

- In 2017, firms plan to invest \$50.9 billion in Ontario, up from \$49.4 billion in 2016 but still below the \$52.1 billion invested in 2015 – and well below the pre-recession peak of \$53.8 billion.<sup>18</sup>



## Skills and Talent Availability

- Of the 62 percent of Ontario businesses who attempted to recruit staff in the last six months of 2016, 82 percent experienced at least one challenge in doing so – usually, finding someone with the proper qualifications.<sup>19</sup>
- Of the new jobs created in the next decade, 40 percent are expected to be in the skilled trades, but only 26 percent of young people aged 13 to 24 are considering a career in these areas.<sup>20</sup>



## Scaling-up and Business Growth

- Although the Ontario government currently offers 127 programs to support business growth, they are not necessarily oriented towards factors that influence growth.<sup>21</sup> Presently, 53 percent of programs provide firms with resources to increase their general inputs (financial assistance and human/physical capital), such as the Strategic Jobs and the Ontario Venture Capital Fund, while fewer initiatives support international trade or other specific factors found to increase firm size and productivity.<sup>22</sup>

To learn more about the OCC's work on job creation, see the [Ontario Economic Report](#), [Breaking Barriers: Ontario's Scale-Up Challenge](#), [Talent in Transition: Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Ontario](#), [Fertile Ground: Growing the Competitiveness of the Agri-food Sector](#) and [Closing the Tourism Gap: Creating a Long-Term Advantage for Ontario](#).

# OUR PRIORITIES

To foster job creation, the OCC encourages the next government to:

## 1. Modernize the apprenticeship system.

The current platforms utilized throughout the apprenticeship application and training processes are onerous, outdated and fragmented. There is an opportunity to enhance support for apprentices by leveraging the Ontario College Application Service to provide candidates with an electronic, single-entry access to the apprenticeship application and registration process.

In addition, it is critical that the province revise the current journeyman-to-apprentice ratio.

Despite the recent decision to revise several ratios to start at 1:1, there needs to be greater flexibility within the Ontario apprenticeship framework like other jurisdictions across Canada. In Nova Scotia, employers can apply for a ratio increase for the number of apprentices per journeyman on a per-project basis. The implementation of a similar process in Ontario could alleviate some of the challenges that employers experience with respect to recruiting sufficient journeymen to hire additional apprentices.

## 2. Redesign Employment Ontario services for both job-seekers and employers and evaluate the potential of an outcomes-based funding model.

Technology has facilitated unprecedented access to information through a variety of channels, creating greater efficiencies and matching clients to services like never before. Clients now expect interaction with providers to be convenient, flexible and personalized – and government services are not exempt from that expectation.

Employment Ontario services should be client-centric, to ensure it is straightforward for individuals to find jobs and employers to find employees. The pathway to transformation should involve building capacity at the staff level as well as collaborating with local partners, such as local chambers and boards of trade, to identify best practices in service delivery. The Government should also work to advance digital design and delivery to ensure that clients are offered the best possible service experience.

Furthermore, we recommend that government evaluate the potential of an outcomes-based funding model for employment services. In accordance to this model, service providers would receive base operational funding supplemented by remuneration paid upon the jobseeker



obtaining employment. The service provider may be eligible to receive additional payment in the form of a 'bonus' if the former client remains employed for over three months. The decision to implement such a model could generate significant efficiencies for government while improving the labour market outcomes of program participants.

**3. Work with industry and post-secondary institutions to ensure that program offerings remain responsive to the changing labour market dynamics and the regional and sectoral needs of Ontario's business community.**

Ontario's tourism, agriculture and mining sectors, to name just a few, are experiencing considerable labour shortages. To address this, we encourage more effective collaboration between government and industry and post-secondary associations, such as Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities, to ensure that program offerings remain responsive to concerns of labour shortages in some of Ontario's crucial sectors. This should be accomplished through an updated assessment of human resources needs in the sector and improved data collection, analysis and sharing protocols.

**4. Allocate resources to focus support on high growth firms and those with high growth potential, by delaying taxation on corporate income growth to overcome Ontario's scale-up challenge.**

Currently, Ontario's tax system contains few incentives to encourage firm growth. In part, this issue warrants a longer-term discussion about the structure of the corporate income tax regime. However, in the short term we encourage the government to exempt firms' incremental income from corporate income tax in a given year. With this exemption, firms that are growing can reinvest their retained income into their business. Conditions to qualify for the exemption could be set to target higher-growth firms; for example, it could require a minimum rate of income growth over the previous year.



**BUILDING  
HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES**

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# CHALLENGES

Ontario is facing a trio of serious challenges impacting the well-being of its citizens and, consequently, the well-being of business:



## Housing

The availability and affordability of housing greatly impacts the cost of living for Ontarians, and limits the ability of Ontario business to attract and retain talent, reducing our competitiveness.

- The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis' (CANCEA) Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio (SCAR) Index has risen more aggressively in Ontario than anywhere else across Canada since 2010. In Ontario and the GTHA, affordability has worsened by approximately 40 percent since the early 1980s, and a further 15 percent since 2000, resulting in both being the highest jurisdiction measures across the entire Index.<sup>23</sup>



## Infrastructure

Ontarians are experiencing the impact of a decades-long infrastructure funding gap; under-served by a transportation, utility, and telecommunications stock that cannot meet the demands of today and has not been built to reflect the challenges of tomorrow, such as climate change.

- Ontario's infrastructure funding gap is estimated, at a minimum, to be \$19 billion.<sup>24</sup> Costly damage to infrastructure because of extreme weather events has become common, and our aging stock is unable to handle the demands of a growing population.<sup>25</sup>



## Health Care

Health care consumes over 40 percent of the provincial budget; approximately \$54 billion in 2016.<sup>26</sup> Demand for health care is only increasing: an aging population requires more services and in greater numbers, chronic diseases and mental illness are increasingly critical, and patients are interested in accessing the newest medical innovations.

- Only 14 percent of Ontario businesses are confident in the sustainability of the Ontario health care system.<sup>27</sup> Half of Ontarians believe that the health care system does not need more money, it just needs to be better managed.<sup>28</sup>

To learn more about the OCC's work on creating healthy communities, see the [Ontario Economic Report](#), [Health Transformation: An Action Plan for Ontario](#) and [Building Better: Setting up the Next Ontario Long-Term Infrastructure Plan for Success](#).

# OUR PRIORITIES

Building strong communities through adequate and affordable housing, sustainable health care, and good infrastructure also supports business prosperity and growth, which in turn supports those communities.

To ensure prosperity the OCC encourages the next government to:

1. **Focus on strategic growth policies by ensuring that land use planning and development regulations are aligned, to increase density and create more housing stock.**

Ontario's housing affordability challenge is due to a series of linked issues: A lack of appropriate housing choices, a lack of housing productivity (e.g. over-housing, low density), and households being "forced" into worse options (purchasing instead of renting, or moving to another community).<sup>29</sup> Development regulations and land use planning should be aligned to allow for more, and more diverse, housing to be built across Ontario. A strategic growth plan must consider housing affordability, which is not possible with a fixed housing stock.

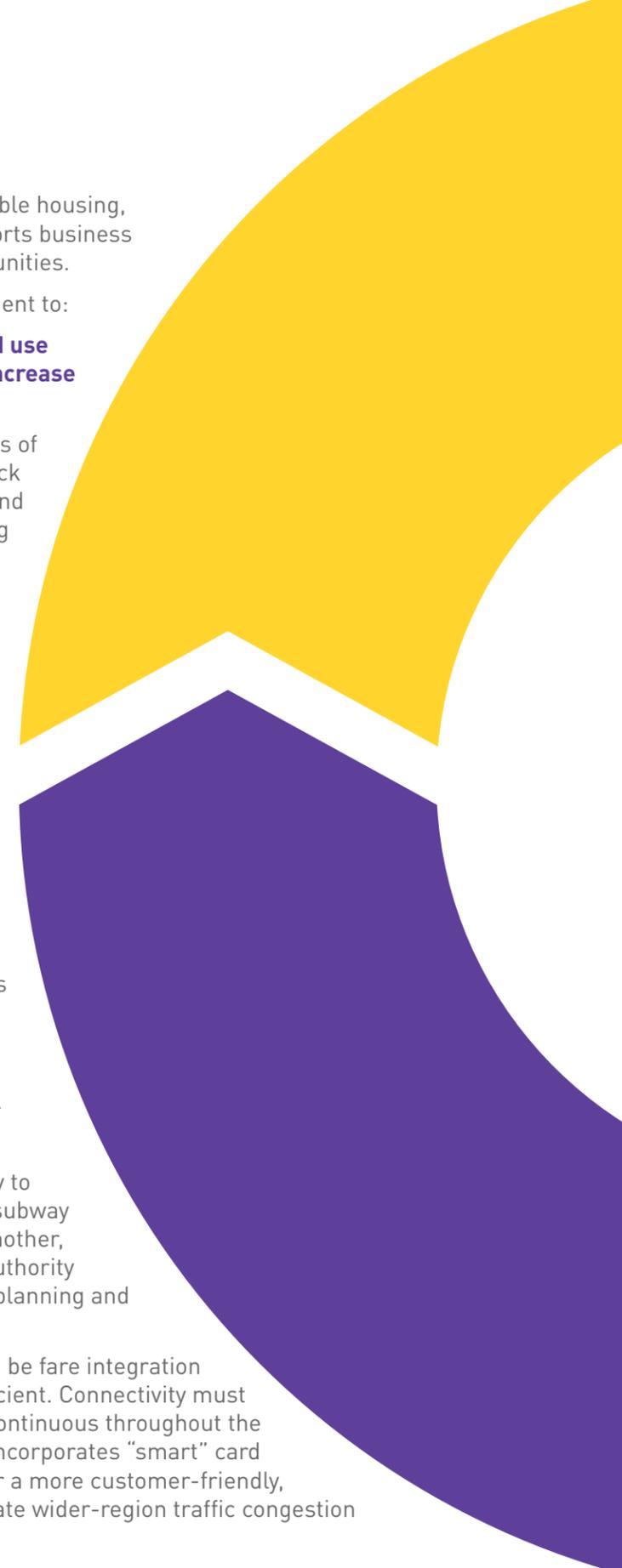
2. **Build adaptable and resilient infrastructure stock that can address future pressures including climate change and demographic shifts.**

As Ontario embarks on a new era of infrastructure spending, the need to build and retrofit assets to be "future-proof" is paramount. This can be done by updating existing building codes and standards to reflect the impacts of climate change and population growth. The government should also support communities across the province in developing their own adaptation methods, such as retrofitting local stormwater infrastructure and shoring up stress breakwalls.

3. **Develop a single transportation authority in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA).**

Ontario should establish a single transportation authority to serve the GTHA. Under this plan, authority for Toronto's subway and light rail lines should be uploaded to Metrolinx (or another, new regional transit authority). A single transportation authority would operate to implement and develop transportation planning and infrastructure in a cost effective and timely manner.

An ancillary benefit of a single transportation body would be fare integration and network connectivity; making transfers easy and efficient. Connectivity must not stop at any municipal boundary; rather it should be continuous throughout the GTHA and be based on an integrated fare system which incorporates "smart" card technology. A fully integrated fare system would make for a more customer-friendly, seamless and affordable transit network, and help alleviate wider-region traffic congestion and gridlock.



**4. Strike a Health Cabinet to improve information-sharing and break down budget silos between Ministries.**

The government should establish a Health Cabinet of representatives from all relevant Ministries, as well as civil society stakeholders. Each participating agency should have a view to their mandate's impact on Ontarians' health and well-being, and how their value proposition can be accurately captured across the public sector, in order to more effectively measure and evaluate fiscal decisions regarding the health care system.

**5. Reform the procurement and supply chain processes within the Ontario health care system.**

The Ontario public health care system needs to be aligned around a tangible definition of value, with a renewed focus on patient outcomes for money spent. Substantial investment should be made in enhanced data collection, analysis and dissemination capabilities, so as to improve decision-making across all points of the system, particularly in procurement and purchasing departments.

The government should also move to accept and implement all recommendations in The Healthcare Sector Supply Chain Expert Panel's report, *Advancing Healthcare in Ontario: Optimizing the Healthcare Supply Chain - A New Model*, alongside consultation and joint-solutioning activities with industry and health care providers.



**IMPROVING  
GOVERNMENT  
ACCOUNTABILITY**

# CHALLENGES

Ontario's current fiscal environment deters investment, reduces the government's capacity to make productivity-enhancing investments, and compromises the province's ability to respond to future economic slowdowns. Beyond balancing the budget, Ontario needs a clear path for long-term fiscal prudence.

At the same time, we need to develop greater institutional safeguards to protect Ontarians against untested decision-making. The unintended consequences of ill-advised government policies have hindered business competitiveness and diminished Ontario's economic resiliency.



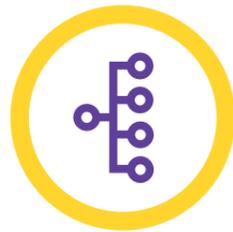
## Debt Management

- Ontario's debt will rise by 21 percent in the next three years, due to interest charges alone,<sup>30</sup> with no existing plans to begin debt repayment.



## Evidence-Based Policy Making

- In Ontario, 83 percent of businesses believe that government should conduct cost-benefit analyses of all new policies, regulations or legislation before any changes take effect.<sup>31</sup>



## Appropriate Timelines for Change

- Due to the short timeline to implementation of Bill 148: *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*, Ontario business faces a \$12 billion economic problem that will put 185,000 jobs at risk.<sup>32</sup>



## Lack of Measurable Targets in Strategic Planning

- Ontario's long-term planning for many growth industries lacks transparency and measurable targets. For example, Ontario's tourism industry has forgone \$16 billion in visitor spending since 2005, due to a lack of measurable targets for strategic growth.<sup>33</sup>

To learn more about on the OCC's work on improving government accountability, see [Reform that Works: A Call for Evidence-Based Workplace Law Modernization in Ontario](#) and [Unlocking the Public Service Economy in Ontario: A New Approach to Public-Private Partnerships in Services](#).

# OUR PRIORITIES

Poor implementation of government initiatives can result in resource waste, political frustration and disruption for citizens, as demonstrated by a series of policy missteps under governments of all political stripes.

To improve government accountability – and confidence in that accountability among Ontarians – the OCC encourages the next government to:

### 1. Create a meaningful plan to tackle the debt and move towards balanced or surplus budgets.

While there is no deficit over the short term in Ontario, there is also no plan for surplus. Beyond balancing the budget, Ontario needs a clear path for long-term fiscal prudence to regain our status as an economic leader in Canada, and a reliable investment destination globally.

### 2. Ensure all proposed policy, regulation and legislation has been evaluated against sound, quantitative evidence.

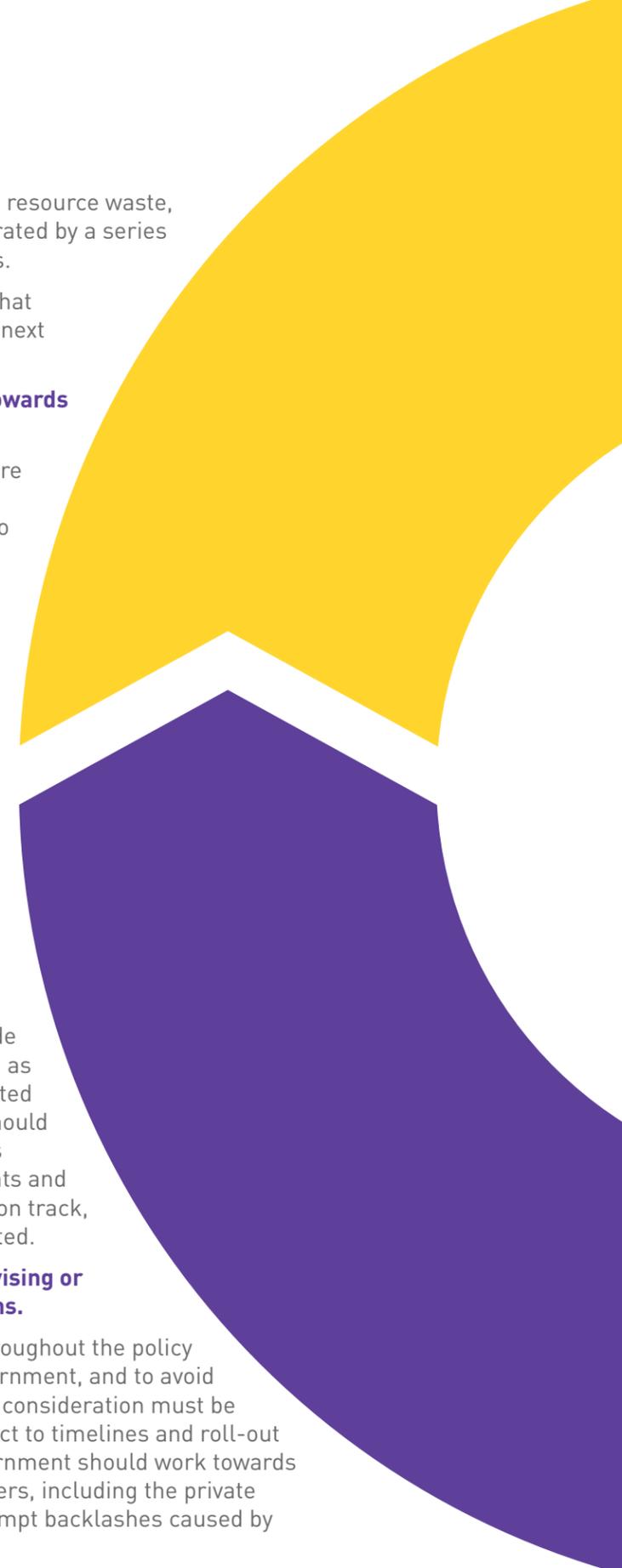
The increased availability of data, and the capability to analyze that data through advanced analytics, has given policymakers an expanded ability to evaluate the costs and benefits of new initiatives, including assessing whether they will achieve their intended outcomes. Government decisions should be based on reliable and publicly-available evidence, and analysis should have a clear acceptability threshold against which a change is evaluated.

### 3. Establish criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of strategic goals and publicly publish these targets to ensure transparency.

The government's long-term planning cycles must include a framework for specific and measurable growth targets, as well as a timeline to achieve those goals (a practice adopted by many other jurisdictions). To do so, the government should clearly define the type of outcome it intends to achieve as well as methods for measuring and evaluating checkpoints and achievements. Measurement ensures that plans remain on track, reach targets on time, and ensure value for dollars invested.

### 4. Provide appropriate timelines to stakeholders when revising or implementing initiatives that will impact their operations.

It is clear today that greater stakeholder participation throughout the policy cycle is necessary in Ontario. In the interest of open government, and to avoid unintended consequences of government action, serious consideration must be given to stakeholder consultation, particularly with respect to timelines and roll-out processes of new policy, regulation and legislation. Government should work towards a closer, more permanent partnership with all stakeholders, including the private sector, academia and civil society organizations, to pre-empt backlashes caused by hasty decision-making.



# CONCLUSION

*Vote Prosperity* is the OCC's comprehensive strategy to promote prosperity for the province of Ontario. The four pillars detailed on these pages are of interconnected and compounding importance, and demonstrate the clear need for Ontario to adopt a comprehensive prosperity strategy.

We believe that Ontario has the fundamental ingredients for sustainable and equitable growth, but bold action and leadership will be required of the next Government of Ontario if we are to make good use of those ingredients. The OCC and its 60,000 members therefore strongly encourage all parties to adopt the policies in this document as part of their respective election platforms.

As the non-partisan voice of business, the OCC looks forward to working alongside the next government to pursue a prosperous future for all Ontarians.

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