



# Planning: our road to economic growth



Winnipeg Metropolitan Region Photo

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By Colleen Sklar

**A** simple fact: regions and communities need reliable, future-proof infrastructure to be strong and successful.

People move their lives and plan their careers where they see the opportunity for a bright future for themselves and their children. They go where good jobs are — and employers go where they have the infrastructure and services they require: Reliable internet, clean and fresh water, safe roads and core municipal services are essential in attracting investment and growing our economy.

To build strong communities and spur the kind of growth we need to move Manitoba forward post-pandemic, we must connect the dots between regional planning, investments in infrastructure, service delivery, the creation of good jobs, housing options and our economic activity.

The good news: as Manitobans, our future can be as bright as the infrastructure we invest in.

The Winnipeg Metropolitan Region (WMR) is in the final stages of completing the first draft of Plan20-50, a 30-year regional land use and servicing plan that includes the City of Winnipeg and the 17

*The WMR would like to thank the leadership team at Manitoba Heavy Construction Association for promoting strategic investment and working collaboratively on the development of Plan20-50. We couldn't have gotten here without you.*

municipalities surrounding it. Plan20-50 is designed to facilitate smart, balanced and collaborative economic growth. It sets out regional-level policies to coordinate and align investments and servicing across municipal boundaries, beyond election cycles.

Successful regions across North America share two things in common: they have long-term vision and they plan for the future.

Manitoba has a legacy of big ideas and executing the seemingly impossible. Our region benefits today from the insightful leadership of those who dared to plan for a prosperous future at the turn of the 20th century. Consider the Red River Floodway, or drive down one of the 10 lanes at Portage and Main, and see how these major projects required long-term vision and a collaborative plan between governments, business and industry. This type of planning for the future takes leadership — because it's not easy.

Growing our economy, protecting our environment and building vibrant communities doesn't just happen; it requires a shared vision, some give and take, and good old-fashioned teamwork.

With a metro region expected to grow to 1.1 million by 2050, we once again need this type of bold leadership. Plan20-50 is a roadmap to harness the strengths of many to achieve the vision of a strong, sustainable and prosperous region. It calls us to plan and budget for investments in transportation, roadways, housing, emergency service provision, water and wastewater infrastructure, while protecting our water, agricultural land and natural resources for a future that

allows our children the opportunity to be successful here.

Elsewhere in Canada, regions have led bold initiatives for key infrastructure projects, such as regional public transit, to support the mobility of people, or broadband internet to enhance connectivity and bridge the urban and rural digital divide. Regions played a central role in coordinating these infrastructure investments and services, unlocking the key to creating complete communities that support good jobs, and attract the skills and investment needed to make a region globally competitive into the future.

Plan20-50 builds on this legacy and best practice to ensure the long-term supply of serviced residential, commercial and industrial land in order to:

- Plan, prioritize and facilitate investment in infrastructure;
- Provide confidence and predictability for investment;
- Ensure the protection of agricultural land, natural land and freshwater resources;
- Build resilience to flooding and drought and the effects of a changing climate; and
- Ensure service delivery to residents and businesses is effective and efficient into the future.

Getting to the first draft of the plan has not been an easy process, and no plan is ever perfect. The leaders of the WMR have taken a balanced approach to addressing the region's needs and meeting the key components necessary for a regional plan.

Learn more and have your say at 20to50.ca