



BUILDING MANITOBA

the West's corridor to trade

Colin Corneau photo



**HEAVY CONSTRUCTION —
GOOD JOBS, PAY AND LONG CAREERS**
PAGE 4

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Manitoba's economy needs investment in trade corridors



CentrePort Canada Photo

Chris Lorenc



Chris Lorenc is the President of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and the Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association

Earlier this summer, Infrastructure Minister Ron Schuler set out his government's vision to make this province Canada's trade hub, and proposed a strategic infrastructure investment plan to get us there within a decade.

We support recognition of Manitoba Infrastructure's role to position Manitoba as a global trade hub. The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association has always seen this province as the keystone in Canada's trade domestically, continentally, to Asia and beyond.

Manitoba enjoys unique geographic features that make it a trade hub: ground, air, rail and – yes – marine ports to all cardinal points. Churchill, in fact, is Canada's only Arctic deep-water shipping port.

The MHCA's advocacy priorities are rooted in the belief that Manitoba is a trading province, its economy heavily dependent on trade's immediate and long-term return to the GDP.

And so, our industry fully supports the province's stated intent to create a strategic infrastructure investment plan. A call for such a plan has been central to MHCA's advocacy recommendations for decades.

In basic terms, the Infrastructure Department's four categories for investment, outlined in the proposal as guidance for infrastructure strategy and short-term investment planning, are solid.

In the MHCA response to the proposal, however, we suggested that rather than setting out a hierarchy of criteria for project and infrastructure investment planning, that the provinces take a more holistic approach.

We see the four categories – renewal; safety and climate resiliency; economic development; connectivity and innovation – as intrinsically related.

The primary objective must be economic development/growth – without which government cannot be assured of adequate revenues with which to fund infrastructure investment or the critical social services Manitobans rely upon.

Climate resilience is closely tied to the goal of economic growth and prosperity.

Renewal, safety and connectivity, as priorities, are integral elements to those prime concerns. Infrastructure assets that are maintained, renewed and connected support safety and environmental stewardship goals.

So how can the province arrange an infrastructure investment strategy that balances the inter-related but sometimes competing goals?

The MHCA proposes that Manitoba's investment priorities should consider the immediate and longer-term returns that flow from the project. That must also consider avoidance of future costs that can flow from strong asset management (renewal) and planning (climate resiliency).

MHCA's principles for strategic infrastructure investment are anchored by the goal of economic growth. And economic growth, for Manitoba and Canada, is tethered tightly to our trade profile and productivity.

In our view, a strong infrastructure investment strategy is one that is informed by and built upon:

- an infrastructure investment deficit analysis, which sets out the condition of provincial highways, bridges, water and wastewater and water-control structures, and the cost of bringing those assets to good shape
- an infrastructure asset-management plan, which attributes value to transportation system and core infrastructure assets, and sets out a manageable schedule for maintenance,

renewal or new construction to meet the needs of a growing population and diversified economy

- dedicated annual and five-year, rolling capital budgets that are supported by sustained and incremental increases, to realize the vision and objective of the infrastructure investment strategy – growth, respect for the environmental and social wealth.

Manitoba Infrastructure's approach to planning has taken important, first steps to ensuring that Manitoba's trade-based economy can be secured, through strategic infrastructure planning and investment.

It has set out to raise identified provincial highways and roads to RTAC rating (a nationally recognized weight-loading classification standard), such that the transportation needs of rural residents, businesses, producers and manufacturers are not impeded by weight-limited routes or seasonal road conditions. This approach underpins provincial trade productivity.

Moving goods to market, however, demands strategic alignment of our trade routes and corridors with regional and national networks, ultimately, to assure current and potential trade partners and markets that we can deliver our products to them, and theirs to us.

This is why the MHCA, itself and through its membership in the Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association, has called upon the federal government to renew the national trade policy framework and recapitalize the national trade corridor investment program.

Further and for Western Canada, the WCR&HCA, joined by the Canadian Construction Association, has proposed the Western Canada Trade Gateways & Corridors Initiative (WCTG&CI). Western Canada, our country's port to a vast, untapped Asian market, is indispensable to Canada's trade profile and productivity and, therefore, its economic health and prosperity.

The importance of Manitoba's engagement and role in a WCTG&CI cannot be overstated. This province is a trade hub, connected to all cardinal points for trade: Emerson is the busiest land crossing west of Windsor; Churchill is Canada's only Arctic port served by a Class A railroad. Its unique geographic advantages, therefore, are critical to making the region Canada's trade port to Asia, in particular.

That's why we say that Manitoba's own infrastructure investment strategy must be crafted to position this province for its own trade and economic growth, while feeding into the WCTG&CI to elevate the trade profile of Western Canada.

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Climate change is an economic issue

Western Canada's heavy construction industry knows that

Global warming is an existential threat. Protecting our environment is an economic issue because addressing climate change requires economic resources – money. Economic stability and growth determine whether we have the investment dollars required to organize the response – the technological innovation, climate-resilient infrastructure, strategic initiatives – sufficient to the challenge facing every community, government, agency and nation. Canada, no less. Economic growth grounds every one of the advocacy priorities of the Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association. This is not a new position; it was the founding principle of WCR&HCA's advocacy when the association began in 1943.

But this advocacy has taken on added urgency, in part because of the heightened priority of addressing climate change. What role does the heavy construction industry and WCR&HCA advocacy play in addressing the threat of climate change? The heavy construction industry builds the infrastructure that carries our economy, largely trade — Canada's trade-to-GDP ratio is just shy of 65% – and the core infrastructure that will allow our homes and communities to be resilient against the extreme weather events that are occurring with increased frequency. The WCR&HCA respects the fiscal and political challenges that face national, provincial and municipal governments. However, those challenges pale in comparison to what our nation will face should we collectively fail to present to the public, the impact on our economy

and social programs if we continue to neglect investment in public core infrastructure including streets, sewer, water and wastewater treatment systems and transportation, in particular trade infrastructure. Strong, reliable and seamless trade transportation infrastructure is critical to our economic growth, and to the revenues returned to our governments. Economic growth generates revenues to our governments that fund our social programs and strategic priorities, most obviously addressing global warming and climate-change resilience. The WCR&HCA's core priorities address economic stability, growth and the necessary strategy Canada and sub-national governments need to ensure we can meet the challenge of climate change head on.



To learn more about the Western Canada Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association and its priorities, go to WCRHCA.com

WCR&HCA has set out in its core priorities to:

- 1. Advance the case for infrastructure investment & economic growth:** trade depends on strong, reliable, seamless transportation infrastructure – highways, corridors and inland, border and marine ports – to move goods, services and talent efficiently to market.
- 2. Endorse a long-term infrastructure program:** Our core infrastructure assets, such as water-control structures are vital to protecting our communities, homes and businesses, and cannot be allowed to fail us through neglect. If our transportation infrastructure crumbles, our trade-based economy cannot thrive. Economic growth generates the revenues to government that are necessary for critical services – health, education, national security, environment – and for all public programs that create the quality-of-life Canadians enjoy.
- 3. Advance a Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Initiative:** 'Look West – Canada's port of entry to Asia': this initiative, gathering support regionally and nationally, is critical to increasing trade productivity in the West and raising its trade profile nationally, continentally and globally. Western Canada plays an indispensable role in efficiently connecting all of Canada to trade opportunities in Asia, and beyond.
- 4. Support the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement:** trade impediments or preferential procurement practices impair the free movement of labour, goods and services. Not only does protectionism hobble trade, and hurt GDP, it will clip the potential for free flow of ideas, innovative technology and initiatives that are necessary to meet the global threat that climate change presents.
- 5. Support open competitive bidding:** the best value for public procurement programs comes from open, competitive bidding. Single-source, restricted bidding or preferential tender practices ultimately cost governments and therefore taxpayers more, with no guarantee of quality. Governments today are pressed to manage revenues carefully; open, competitive bidding is central to that task.
- 6. Focus on Canada's next infrastructure report card:** we can't protect our homes, families, communities and future against the risk of extreme weather events without reliable roads, water & wastewater, highways, bridges and water-control structures. Assessing the condition of the infrastructure we have allows governments to set out multi-year investment plans to maintain critical infrastructure assets. That is an economic and an environmental imperative.



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Phil Hossack Photo

"I like concrete finishing. I like the design (element). I love it."
 — Tewodrose Mengistu



MHCA Photo

"I love the independence that Munro gives me. They're asking me what I want to do next, to grow with the company."
 — Samantha Line



MHCA Photo

"A lot of people can make good money, knowing this industry. We're in need for more skilled labour."
 — Dave Choken

"I enjoy going to work. Every day there are new obstacles (to master)."
 — Mike Houle

An industry open, ready for all



"Everybody in this business has had mentors. New hires need a mentor from your crew."
 — Colleen Munro

For those looking to break into good-paying jobs with lots of room for advancement, Dave Choken has a suggestion for you: come to heavy construction.

The supervisor with Bituminex Paving's underground division is always looking for the next potential hire.

"A lot of people can make good money, knowing this industry," Choken, 40, says. "We're in need for more skilled labour." Choken, originally from Lake Manitoba First Nation, says that when speaking to people who work in other industries, he lets them know the opportunities for careers in heavy construction. "We pay much better and typically work all year 'round."

Choken says there's a general lack of awareness about what the industry offers for starting labourers and especially for those looking to learn and advance, in increasing levels of responsibility and salary.

The industry has to get better at selling itself, particularly to people in under-represented groups – newcomers, women, Indigenous and the likes, says Nicole Chabot, Vice-president of L. Chabot Enterprises and Board Chair of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association.

"You can't be what you can't see," Chabot says. "It's a good career and I don't think we (the industry) champion that enough."

Chabot says her company has had success, almost organically – Indigenous and newcomer employees encouraged friends and family to apply.

Like many companies, Chabot Enterprises is working to attract more women to join the industry.

"I am not the first Indigenous woman to make this industry my home, but I



Phil Hossack Photo

"My crew is one of the best in the company right now."
 — Abdul Navid Abdul Baqi

recognize there are too few of "me" and too few from diverse communities working in heavy construction.

Choken's example shows it is active, deliberate recruitment that pays off – approaching individuals with a pitch that is attractive and welcoming, showing people there is a place for them in the industry and specific worksites.

"We're starting our labourers out at around \$20 an hour. We work all year, at job sites around the city."

Pay was the draw for Mike Houle, an excavator operator on Choken's crew.

But Houle, from Ebb and Flow First Nation, says he likes the camaraderie of the crew and the challenges of operating a piece of heavy equipment around worksites where there are ever-present hazards.

"I enjoy going to work. Every day there are new obstacles" to master, he says.

Retention is an issue industry-wide, largely because the work is demanding.

Colleen Munro, a past Chair of MHCA's Board and owner of the Munro Group, says it pays when recruiting within a community to do pre-employment preparation work and to have community members, such as



“You can’t be what you can’t see. Heavy construction is a good career and I don’t think we champion that enough.”
 — Nicole Chabot

MHCA’s website now has a Diversity tab, to serve as a resource for employers, employees and those looking to get into heavy construction.

“We want everyone to see the doors to good work, well-paying jobs and benefits and prospective careers are open to all,”

says Jackie Jones, MHCA Education and Diversity Programs Advisor.

The Diversity tab of the website offers resources for education and training as well as showcasing employers and employees who work in the industry, with words of advice gained from experience.

“Our industry hasn’t done enough to publicize the opportunities, the history of welcoming newcomers and to open the doors to anyone looking for a solid career start,” says Nicole Chabot, MHCA Board Chair. “But we’re changing that.”

the First Nation chief and council, suggest who may be inclined to work on a project.

“Having the Manitoba Construction Sector Council go in and do preliminary job training, showing ‘this is what you need to expect’, really helps,” Munro says. Construction can involve 12-hour days, and support at home such as day care, is important, as is transportation to the work site.

The big thing, however, is mentorship.

“Everybody in this business has had mentors. New hires need a mentor from your crew.”

Samantha Line was hired earlier this year at Munro’s Lilyfield Quarry as a lab technician. She has worked with Manitoba Infrastructure in the water management division and with Manitoba Hydro, and at the remote Keeyask generating station.

Line, 25, wants women to know heavy construction offers great career paths, with many job options and room to advance.

“I love the independence that Munro gives me. They’re asking me what I want to do next, to grow with the company,” she says. “It’s not an industry that’s meant for men only. Women can do this just as well as men can.”

Abdul Navid Abdul Baqi, a concrete foreman with Bituminex Paving, agrees. Abdul Baqi says the industry is a real opportunity to break into the job market even if you have limited experience in a new country and rudimentary language skills.

“When I came here, my wife was translating for me to my first boss,” says Abdul Baqi, who came to Canada in 2010.

His concrete crew is a wide mix of nationalities – Philippines, Poland, Ukraine, China, Ethiopia and Jamaica. Abdul Baqi speaks six languages, reflecting the exposure in his childhood in Afghanistan and countries he lived in.

The key is to be willing to learn, and work hard. “My crew is one of the best in the company right now.”

The industry has always been a place where newcomers get to work, says MHCA President Chris Lorenc. For example, historically Portuguese workers were drawn to the concrete side of the industry.

Over the years, the MHCA’s WORKFORCE™ and WORKSAFELY™ programs have delivered heavy equipment operator training to Indigenous and northern communities, and tailored safety training and education to individual communities and worksites.

Dennis Cruise, President and General Manager at Bituminex Paving, says the company some years ago translated its training and safety documents into Portuguese. It’s that type of accommodation that makes space for and helps retain recruits, Cruise notes.

“English isn’t the first language of many of our employees,” he says. “Our industry lends itself to diversity. Newcomers are drawn to the work and they are more than welcome.”

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Fuelling Canada's post-COVID economic recovery with trade infrastructure



John Law

An unintended consequence of supply-chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has been the rude awakening for the general public of the fragility of the systems that deliver goods for our on-demand, always-there, lifestyle.

What existed quietly in the background has been thrust into the media spotlight by coronavirus-related port disruptions in China, container delivery issues like the ship blockage at the Suez Canal and border-crossing challenges for truckers at the United States border. Resulting food shortages,

unavailable or delayed consumer products, a lack of used and new car inventory, major price increases like wood products for home

An opportunity to renew national leadership at the Winnipeg meeting of the Council of the Federation in October

renovations and talk of empty stockings at Christmas have all gotten the public's attention in a way that lectures or long explanations never could.

In short, consumers who are also voters, have come to

better appreciate what Canadian companies that rely upon trade and transportation to generate two-thirds of this country's income

have known for some time: In the 21st Century, international supply chains comprising key trade-corridor infrastructure serve as the platform and conduit for global commerce.

This dawning, wider realization

of the importance of supply chains and the transportation logistics that underlie them has created a renewed opportunity for political leadership and public discussion of the role that trade infrastructure plays for Canadians' quality of life.

It is also why Canada's best prospect to recover from the pandemic and kickstart a next generation of economic growth must include a national plan for trade infrastructure excellence. Doing so will facilitate delivery of both imports as well as critical exports to world markets that are demanding Canadian products to rebuild.

Enabling economic growth and funding post-COVID economic recovery means ensuring Canada is able to leverage the rebound in global demand for its exports.

Today, robust supply-chain infrastructure is not a "nice-to-have", it is a minimum requirement to participate in increasingly competitive global markets. Yet, Canada's consistent drop in global infrastructure rankings for the last decade suggests that international customers have been losing confidence in our ability to competitively deliver products that are in demand.

The significance of Canada's trade-based economy to our prosperity has some lamenting the relatively small proportion of federal program funding currently devoted to trade and transportation infrastructure, compared to other federal infrastructure spending. But the need for top quality transportation assets and the economic returns that they enable is no less a priority for provincial and territorial governments that need economic growth to replenish their respective treasuries following the financial demands of the pandemic. And the priority is the same for private sector companies to build back their bottom lines, increase profitability and create jobs.

To recover and eventually prosper post-COVID, Canada's trade infrastructure challenges need the collective attention and, equally important, the coordination of all key stakeholders.

This is not an either-or proposition in face of the broad hard and soft infrastructure needs that the country faces. Funding trade infrastructure creates the basis for revenue generation to support spending on other priorities.

In a post-COVID recovery environment when the country has huge deficits and even larger demands to enable recovery, taking the first step to put in place a long-term plan for what is needed is critical not just for those businesses that move goods but for the entire country. This is now truly a national priority of the first order.

The next scheduled meeting of the Council of the Federation, which will bring together Premiers from across the country with a newly elected prime minister, is scheduled for early October in Winnipeg. This meeting is timely for elected leaders to position Canada for supply-chain success and a strong economic recovery, by committing to a coordinated, sustainable plan that includes best-in-class trade infrastructure for its trade-based economy.

Canada's Council of Ministers of Transportation is already working on a report to improve trade corridor competitiveness and national business and research organizations are advancing recommendations to fix systemic logistics problems.

By committing to a long-term plan to improve our country's trade-enabling infrastructure, Canada's first ministers can align the work of key stakeholders and leverage current public awareness to optimize the post-pandemic recovery by ensuring Canada can successfully compete for growing global markets.

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John Law is the president of Lawmark International Consulting and a senior fellow with the Canada West Foundation. He is the former chair of the Canadian Council of Deputy Ministers responsible for Transportation and Infrastructure and served as president of the Transportation Association of Canada.

He wrote this with contributions from Carlo Dade, director of the Trade and Investment Centre at the Canada West Foundation.





Protect Canada's economic future, invest in trade infrastructure

Perrin Beatty

While the pandemic has understandably consumed the attention of Canadians for the last year-and-a-half, we cannot afford to ignore the long-term economic challenges facing our country. They include the requirement to ensure that our transportation infrastructure is meeting the needs of the Canadian business community by enabling them to move goods more easily and reliably to customers both domestically and abroad.

Unfortunately, there is never enough investment in trade-friendly infrastructure. The investments made across all levels of government can too often be sporadic. A glaring example is the infrastructure deficit facing Canada, estimated at \$50-570 billion. This deficit is most noticeable in Northern Canada, which faces significant capacity and transportation issues, including a lack of roads, because of its geography and climate patterns.

But Canada can reverse this deficit with a strategic and long-term approach to infrastructure spending.

Demand for funding continues to outstrip supply in programs like the National Trade Corridors Fund. The fund, which sees \$4.2 billion spread out over 11 years to help finance Canadian infrastructure projects, is being oversubscribed with lots of worthwhile projects that could serve a useful purpose if they were to receive the funding they need.

Getting this right is critical, given that we are a trading nation with export and import activity accounting for two-thirds of our country's GDP. Additionally, over 900,000 Canadians work in the transportation and warehousing sector, which accounts for about 3% of our GDP.

The Canadian Chamber has long proposed increasing investments in infrastructure across all modes of transportation that move goods: rail, air, marine, and land. In the wake of COVID-19, this is now more important than ever.

The early days of the pandemic saw disruptions to Canada's supply chains. While the public saw images of toilet paper shelves running bare at local grocery stores, we regularly heard from members working behind the scenes who faced uncertainty moving a much wider range of cargo and receiving goods, whether it was due to backlogs at ports, quarantine rules for crews, or a shortage of shipping containers. We are still feeling the reverberations today, with shipping costs persisting at stubbornly high levels.

Increasing our investment in infrastructure is about enhancing resiliency for businesses and consumers since it will provide additional routes to move cargo. Providing more ways to move goods, and improving the reliability of transportation assets now in place, will mean more options for companies in those critical moments. These investments can



The Hon. Perrin Beatty, P.C., O.C., is the President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The Canadian Chamber is the country's largest business organization and represents over 200,000 companies across Canada.

make Canada a leader by funding projects that provide options for moving cargo while also creating more tools for trade diversification – another area of critical importance.

Diversification is important as a means of economic resiliency to shifting geopolitical and trade relations but it is also an issue of national security; some nations have resorted to "weaponization" of trade.

As we likely all recall, our country went through a bruising four years under the previous U.S. administration where we endured the persistent threat of the old North American Free Trade Agreement being tossed aside. Despite a good outcome in the end, the journey was not without its perils and there were moments it seemed ready to take a disastrous turn.

Looking across the Pacific, we are also facing risks in our trade relationship with China. While it seemed like there was a major market awaiting Canadian businesses in China a decade ago, the landscape radically changed and prospects dimmed after the arrest of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor.

However, Canada has spent the last decade creating a network of trade deals across the globe. Our businesses have a vast number of customers beyond North America and China at their fingertips. Now is the time to help them finally connect. We have not succeeded thus far in doing so, with three-quarters of our trade still going to the United States. Part of that imbalance is the product of the Canadian business culture, but improved infrastructure will go a long way to helping us reach these important new markets.

We do not have the luxury of continuing to lag in our infrastructure investments. Action is long overdue.



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Mary Van Buren



Mary Van Buren is the President of the Canadian Construction Association

Construction is a key economic sector, employing millions of Canadians with good paying jobs. The industry is made up of nation-builders, creating and maintaining the essential infrastructure Canadians rely on every day, including the infrastructure we rely on to connect supply chains and efficiently move goods and services across borders.

Throughout the pandemic, the industry has demonstrated its ability to move projects forward, safely, implementing and complying with provincial health guidelines across Canada. From hospitals where we receive care, to schools where our children get educated, to the roads we drive on to connect with each other, construction was there for you, in your community.

As Canadians prepare for the post-pandemic world, Canada has an opportunity to build a brighter and better future – one that supports sustainable growth and benefits each of us. However, action must be taken to empower the construction industry to lead the recovery today and generate benefits for decades to come. Setting national goals around building sustainability into our infrastructure and supporting the **Western Canada Trade Gateways and Corridors Initiative** are just two significant opportunities for Canada.

Infrastructure investment can be transformational: a catalyst for nation-building and achieving the aspirations of all Canadians. Yet Canada's infrastructure strategy has been chronically underfunded, leading to a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure deficit for our aging assets, and little room for visionary investment.

As a long-time champion of infrastructure investment as a driver of economic, social and environmental benefits, the CCA is focusing on three issues with the federal government:

Increase infrastructure investment:

To be successful, infrastructure investment funds must be predictable, flow quickly and be aligned with provincial, municipal and Indigenous needs. To achieve this, the federal government must create an independent advisory body that can align governments at the provincial and municipal level to address infrastructure deficits across Canada. Having multi-year projects in the pipeline gives a stability to the planning that the industry needs to line up a skilled workforce and private-sector investment.

Work with industry to build the workforce of the future:

The construction industry is facing a serious workforce shortage that will impact our progress on building for the future. There are tremendous opportunities for Canadians in construction; in trades, as project managers or in emerging areas like machine learning. To fill this gap, the federal government needs to work with industry to recruit, train, and retain the workforce of tomorrow. We know applying quotas when the workforce simply does not exist will not solve the root issues. Instead, the industry must be seen as a career of choice, particularly among underrepresented groups. This can only be achieved through partnership between industry and government, including funding for CCA's Talent Fits Here campaign and programs that support building workforce capacity.

Refresh the government's approach to improve fair and competitive procurement:

The federal government's procurement strategy is outdated and leaves little room for creative solutions and fair risk sharing. In order to build the infrastructure needed across the country and recruit the workforce of the future, the federal procurement strategy needs to adapt to encourage innovation, account for long-term value and sustainability, and explore the use of alternative delivery models.

A thriving construction sector can bring Canadians' aspirations to life. The industry is ready to lead the recovery and Build a Better Canada.





Illustrating the value of aggregates

Aggregates are literally the foundation to every piece of infrastructure in our built environment – our roads, highways, bridges, water & wastewater and water-control structures. Further, they are widely used in building our neighbourhoods –

everything from our house foundations, to sidewalks, playgrounds and recreation facilities, and for our industrial, commercial and retail sectors.

Sourcing aggregates – rock, stone and sand – close to where infrastructure is built is the key

to keeping not just the building costs down, but to holding in check our environmental footprint.

Greenhouse gas emissions, for example, would rise if we had to source aggregates farther afield.

In the Capital Region, we are fortunate to have aggregate resources close to our communities.



Sand, stone and gravel

Sand, stone and gravel – aggregates – are the building blocks of almost every type of infrastructure in our communities – sidewalks, house foundations, roads and concrete buildings, play structures such as skate board parks and splash pads, walking and cycling paths and trails.

Even the glass, ceramic and asphalt materials we use every day need aggregate materials in their production.

“DON'T MAKE GRAVEL TRAVEL”

Sand, stone and gravel are found in high-quality deposits around Manitoba, including Rockwood, Rosser & Springfield in the Capital Region. Having these nearby natural deposits, where pits and quarries can be developed, reduces the environmental footprint and cost of constructing roads, houses, office buildings, public parks and shopping centres.

Let's not make gravel travel. If we had to travel just 75 kilometres farther (150 kms, round-trip), the environmental cost would be significant – the equivalent in greenhouse gas emissions of putting another 23,000 cars on the road.

There would also be added wear and tear on vehicles and our highways.

Some 20 million tonnes of aggregates – about 700,000 truckloads – are produced each year in Manitoba, much of it in the Capital Region. If each 30-tonne truck had to travel an extra 150 kilometres, it would create an additional 110,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂) annually, or the equivalent of adding 23,000 cars on the road.



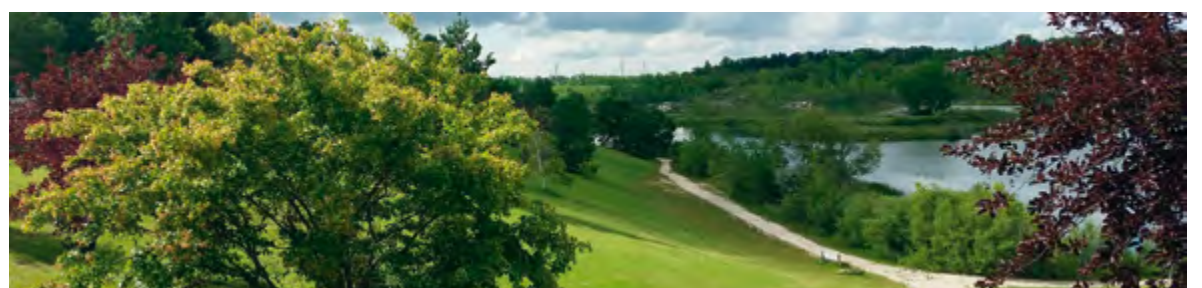
VALUABLE RESOURCE, GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Our natural resources must be managed wisely. Pits and quarries are operated in an environmentally safe and sustainable manner, respecting provincial regulation and municipal zoning rules. Aggregate operators are good neighbours in their communities, working within municipal rules for sound, dust, water protection and operating hours.



When the pits and quarries are depleted, they are rehabilitated to fit in with the rural landscape, or turned into recreation areas.

The jewel of East St. Paul – the Swistun Family Heritage Park – was once a quarry. Today it is a ravine with lakes, grassy slopes, trails and wildlife, where residents walk, canoe, skate and toboggan.

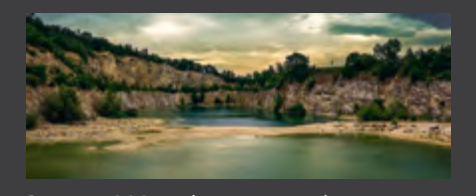


Water pumped during dredging of pits and quarries is sent to a settling pond. The water is used to wash the aggregates and is again recovered and reused.

Aggregates recovered when old roads are torn up or buildings are demolished are processed for reuse in new or reconstructed roads and sidewalks. This helps conserve our finite aggregate resources.



Rehabilitation plans are overseen by Manitoba's Agriculture and Resources Development department and funded by a levy producers pay for every tonne of aggregate produced.



Since 1993, when Manitoba's quarry rehabilitation program began, some 2,600 projects worth \$44 million have rehabilitated more than 10,000 hectares.

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Workplaces have the tools to fight the pandemic



Jackie Jones



Jackie Jones is the MHCA WORKSAFELY™ Education and Diversity Programs Advisor

We all know that prevention measures work in controlling physical and health hazards in our workplaces – engineering controls, safe work procedures and personal protective equipment. Dealing with the hazard presented by COVID-19 is no different. Workplaces, and indeed all of us, have the tools to fight COVID-19.

“With over 75,000 employers in Manitoba, we can’t have a one-size-fits-all approach,” says Dr. Denise Koh, Chief Occupational Medical Officer. “So it’s important for employers to continually assess the risk factors unique to their worksite, their workforce and their industry itself in light of our constantly changing circumstances, and then implement control measures to mitigate that risk.”

“Keeping the hierarchy of controls in mind is so important in this pandemic, because our public health orders and guidelines reflect that,” continues Dr. Koh. “Our vaccines are very safe, extremely effective, and really our best and only way out of this pandemic, so that’s why we’ve put most of our eggs in the ‘vaccine basket’. They’re at the top of the hierarchy because they help eliminate the hazard from the workplace and can also be seen as an administrative control.”

The implementation of proven prevention measures such as masks, hygiene and social distancing have helped prevent the spread of COVID-19 in heavy construction workplaces, allowing our industry to continue to work through the pandemic. COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at reducing transmission and preventing illness and hospitalizations. Prevention measures work.

As the province slowly begins its journey to recovery following COVID-19, the heavy construction industry will continue to move forward and grow from lessons learned in this past year. At the beginning of the pandemic, the heavy construction industry was deemed essential and was able to continue its work throughout the lock down.

The most significant lesson learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic was the value of re-focusing on workplace safety and health. Of course, this always has been a priority in the heavy construction industry, but the onset of the pandemic meant that following all pertinent safety protocols became even more important.

The importance of health and hygiene, as well as safety, were amplified. All of this has had to happen while maintaining safety standards to address common hazards present in the more traditional aspects of heavy construction.

To adapt and succeed, businesses must move forward with resiliency and caution. It goes without saying that it is in a company’s best interest to continue to take COVID-19 safety just as seriously as all other aspects of workplace safety.

Despite the changing status of provincial public health restrictions, and given the risks associated with COVID-19 variants, WORKSAFELY™ strongly recommends that companies continue to practice prevention measures – wearing masks indoors, social distancing

and effective hygiene. Masks, considered as PPE for this pandemic, are very important, especially when minimum distancing can’t be maintained, Dr. Koh says. “They are considered our last line of defense because they are the least effective of the controls and the most difficult to implement and ensure compliance.”

“Interestingly, we’ve normalized mask-wearing in everyday life, so the compliance and implementation challenges are less of a problem here, and we’re really seeing the added benefits from this control and our social change overall in terms of mitigating the risk.”

WORKSAFELY™ strongly recommends that people get vaccinated against COVID-19 and that employers encourage their workers to do the same.

So, let’s use what we know about prevention to put an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. Let’s get vaccinated!



Dr. Denise Koh
 Chief Occupational Medical Officer



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Colin Corneau Photo

Roads are busy, under construction

– slow down and drive with caution

Don Hurst

Fall, for the heavy construction industry, is crunch time for completing projects before the road construction season ends. However, fall also means many people are back at work from vacation and children, back at school. So, as commuting and traffic increases, many on their way to daily destinations will be seeing the bright orange construction signs regularly.

A number of serious incidents, caused by motorists' lack of attention in construction zones, have injured construction workers and damaged equipment. This is alarming to the industry and associated organizations aiming to keep the public and workers safe.

Trevor Shwaluk, Safety Advisor for MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ program, is one of the lead instructors for WORKSAFELY™'s flagperson certification. Over the last several years, Shwaluk has heard numerous reports from our companies

of careless driving in road construction zones: people moving barricades and proceeding through work zones; cell-phone use while driving through construction zones; and, road rage. Worse, there have been reports of motorists driving intentionally towards flaggers at high speed and turning away at the last second, narrowly missing the worker.

"Safe driving is a responsibility of everyone on the road. There is a reason speed fines double in construction zones – to help ensure a safe work environment for Manitoba's construction workers," Shwaluk says. "By doing your part, slowing down and respecting direction in construction zones, the driving public can help ensure that our road workers have a safe workplace, and everyone can get home safely."

If a construction zone is unavoidable, drivers should allow extra time in their schedules, in case there are traffic delays. Every safe driver has a responsibility to exercise caution and good judgment in construction zones. Consideration for the safety of construction workers and other

motorists can help turn highway construction areas into "safe zones" for everyone.

"It's important when we're driving to remember that in a construction zone, our roads and highways are also workplaces, and everyone has the right to a safe workplace. We need to ensure that every person at work is treated with the same level of respect and consideration," Shwaluk says.

Many motorists view road construction workers as an inconvenience, but they should rather look at them as a service. Road and maintenance workers do their best to minimize motorist inconvenience and keep everyone safe, while repairing and building our roads and highways. It is up to motorists to be alert, aware and responsive.

The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association's message is simple: Road construction zones are people's workplaces and should be treated with respect and consideration for the workers.

Whether you are driving or walking to school or work, keep these tips in mind, when travelling near construction zones:



Don Hurst is the Director of MHCA WORKSAFELY™ Education and Training



Drivers:

- Slow down – take it slow to raise your awareness and limit your risk of collision.
- Follow directions on signs – carefully read road signs to better understand your route.
- Be patient – with road and sidewalk changes, pedestrians may need more time to cross the road.

Pedestrians:

- Use designated crossings – play it safe and find the nearest designated crossing.
- Be alert – put your phone away and watch where you are going.
- Do not cut through construction zones – stick to designated routes and leave the construction zones to the workers.



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Heavy construction – women work as well as men

Jackie Jones

The days when the heavy construction workforce was almost exclusively populated by men are in the past. Employers are attracting women to all levels in the industry.

“Manitoba’s heavy construction industry is dedicated to attract, educate, train and recruit young women, but it has some ways to go to get the word out,” says Nicole Chabot, MHCA Board Chair and Vice-president of L. Chabot Enterprises.

Samantha Line, 25, is a lab technician at Munro Group’s Lilyfield Quarry. A University of Manitoba graduate in Environmental Studies, she has worked with Manitoba Infrastructure’s water management structures division, and for Manitoba Hydro at the Keeyask hydroelectric generating station.

“I grew up in a family that was from the construction sector and the farming sector,” says Line. “I was not raised to be an office worker.”

The experience of working in a remote location while at Keeyask – the camp was outside of Gillam – helped prepare her for work in a male-dominated field.

Line says she feels women need to consider their opportunities in construction, noting there is a wide variety of jobs to be had and good careers. “It’s not an industry that’s meant for men only. Women can do this just as well as men can.”

She understands why some might be intimidated at the thought of operating large pieces of heavy equipment, but advises that women should give themselves a break and just get started.

“You don’t start with 10 years of experience. You have to start somewhere and you have to be kind to yourself when you start.”

She notes that heavy construction offers a diverse work environment. “You can do pretty much anything you want within the construction industry. There are so many opportunities for development, for your goals and your skills.”

Line’s job is test samples of crushed rock to ensure they meet roadbuilding specifications for aggregates, set by project owners, such as the City of Winnipeg and Manitoba Infrastructure. She also does water-level monitoring at the quarry, in the RM of Rosser.

Quarry work was new to her, and after about a week’s worth of training, she was on her own, working things out.

“You make mistakes, but that’s okay. You’re not going to be perfect, Day 1.”

Line says her work environment has been welcoming and the co-workers are helpful and respectful.

She loves the independence working for Munro has given her at Lilyfield, and she can see the potential for career growth.

“You can’t be what you can’t see,” Chabot states. “I think there is a need to highlight the success stories to really put that in front of people and especially young girls and women and have them know that there is lots of opportunity here for them.”

Chabot has been part of the construction industry for most of her life and encourages women to seek all the support they need to do the best job possible. She knows the frustrations of working in a male-dominated industry but also emphasizes the benefits it can have.

“Some days will be infuriating at times. Call it out but do not let it get to you,” she advises. “Working hard and being confident is key. Remember that there will be many times when you will bring a different perspective to the table, which is a great advantage. This will make it easier to stand out and your stakeholders will more likely to remember you.”

In a usually male-dominated industry, things are improving as employers start to see the benefit of a diverse workforce. Even though there are further steps to go, the point is clear: Don’t fear stepping outside your comfort zone, get the support you need, and be the best you can be.

“There’s so much growth and innovation going on now,” Chabot said. “I think it’s a great opportunity for anyone who is interested in a career in construction to get in now, but certainly for our young women out there.”

MHCA, with industry and government partners, has entered into agreements for introductory courses aimed at women and students, in River East Transcona and Seven Oaks school divisions, says MHCA President Chris Lorenc.

“The MHCA has deliberately scaled up its initiatives to reach diverse groups and show young or mature workers who are unaware of the opportunities, what heavy construction can offer them,” says Lorenc.

For example, the Seven Oaks School Division will see students, starting this month, enroll in the 10-month Introduction to Heavy Construction Program, an outcome of a partnership between the school division, the Manitoba Construction Sector Council and the MHCA. It will offer students training in heavy equipment operation with simulators, mechanical repair and welding of heavy equipment, blasting and drilling with simulators, safety training and surveying, and an extended work practicum. Upon completion, students receive eight credits toward the Mature Student Status High School Diploma.



Jackie Jones is the MHCA WORKSAFELY™ Education and Diversity Programs Advisor



MHCA Photo



Giving youth a path to good jobs, careers in heavy construction



MHCA Photo



Jackie Jones is the MHCA WORKSAFELY™ Education and Diversity Programs Advisor



Jackie Jones

Across Manitoba, there is a continuous demand for heavy construction workers, and COVID-19 has compounded the shortages of skilled and general labour, surveys show.

The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association is recognizing the need to be hands-on with educational partners to bring interested students into the industry. The MHCA has partnered with the Manitoba Construction Sector Council and the Seven Oaks School Division to offer a new Cooperative Vocational Introduction to Heavy Construction Program.

“One of the most important parts of my job is to promote the construction occupations to youths across the province of Manitoba,” says James Murphy, Community and Youth Liaison with the Manitoba Construction Sector Council.

Murphy, who some may recognize as a former Blue Bomber, has spoken to thousands of youth about considering the construction industry as a career. He finds there is one common denominator he has seen with the youth: they lack the understanding of the basic fundamentals of working in the construction industry.

“This program is the first of its kind in Manitoba and gives young people the ability to explore the many diverse opportunities that exist within the heavy construction industry, and allow the industry to highlight those who are succeeding in the field.”

The 10-month program will introduce youth to careers in heavy construction and will include: introduction to heavy equipment operation with simulator training; mechanical repair and welding of heavy equipment; blasting and drilling with simulators; safety

training; and, surveying. Industry experts will be invited to share their experience and respond to students’ inquiries.

The Seven Oaks School Division’s cooperative vocational programs boast an 85% success rate because the model balances learning with an extended work practicum.

Upon completion, students receive eight credits in the Mature Student Status High School Diploma.

“This program is industry driven and designed for each student to learn at their own pace while being monitored by certified instructors to ensure that they are learning as if they were on a job site,” Murphy says.

The pandemic has only heightened the demand for innovative learning opportunities. Across the country, students’ education has been severely disrupted due to COVID-19 and some are struggling. The Introduction to Heavy Construction program is a way to get these students back on track. The program uses virtual reality and simulator technology as a teaching strategy and connects students directly to the heavy construction employers and the workplace. Students are engaged in class and are able to apply new learning to practice in the workplace.

In the heavy construction industry, young adults definitely add to the diversity of the workforce. By reaching out to students, the industry is investing in the next generation of workers who have the technical and soft skills to move the construction industry forward.

“What excites me about the new Seven Oaks Introduction to Heavy Construction Program is being able help young people make informed career choices,” says Murphy.

“For me, that’s better than coaching pro athletes.”



James Murphy
Community and Youth Liaison with the Manitoba Construction Sector Council



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COR™ certification a symbol of safety, badge of honour



Maple Leaf Construction Photo



For Jared Griffiths, the COR™ logo is more a symbol that identifies a safe and healthy workplace. It is also a badge of honour.

Jared is the safety and health coordinator for Maple Leaf Construction, a WORKSAFELY COR™ certified company, meaning the company has implemented a comprehensive safety and health program that meets nationally recognized standards set by members of the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations, including the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA).

"We are proud to showcase the COR™ banner," Griffiths says. "It means something to us and to the heavy construction industry. It is proof we are dedicated to the safety of our people and the public."

The company and Griffiths' commitment to providing an effective safety and health management program for employees hasn't gone unnoticed. Griffiths is the recipient of the MHCA WORKSAFELY™ 2021 Safety Leader Award.

Safety is the most important part of the work the industry does, and improving worksite safety is a daily process for all heavy construction companies. The Safety Leader Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate outstanding achievement and commitment to the pursuit of safety in the heavy construction industry.

Griffiths' determination in pursuing knowledge, increasing awareness of hazards and the implementation of proper controls has created a strong safety culture within Maple Leaf Construction. His dedication to safety and his willingness to contribute has made Griffiths a key resource and asset to the heavy construction industry.

Griffiths says Maple Leaf Construction's safety efforts have been shaped largely by working with MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ program, as part of COR™.

One of the primary benefits of being COR™ certified, he says, is that it allows Maple Leaf Construction to remain competitive

in an increasingly competitive marketplace. "Our customers expect it because they want proof of a safety program."

COR™ certification is valid for a three-year period. To remain certified, a company must conduct an annual internal audit. It must also take part in an independent audit every three years and demonstrate specific training elements have been maintained during that time.

Griffiths says Maple Leaf Construction's safety and health team sees the auditing process as an opportunity rather than a problem.

"The audit process is what we use as a quality control process. It is a process that allows us to identify opportunities to improve."

Another benefit of being part of WORKSAFELY's COR™ program is that it provides companies with access to a wealth of valuable resources. For example, being a part of the WORKSAFELY COR™ program allows Maple Leaf Construction to access training such as traffic control coordinator.

"What participation in this program is intended to do is provide them with an industry-accepted, minimum approach to maintaining and promoting safety in their workplaces," says Don Hurst, director of WORKSAFELY™ education and training for the MHCA. "They have an approach that is proven, if demonstrated and operated successfully, to protect people in the workplace — to minimize injuries and reduce costs."

Hurst explains that WORKSAFELY™ training — like the accreditations it makes possible — is an ongoing, collaborative process, and those who sign on are taking an important first step towards protecting their organizations' greatest assets.

"It's a statement that they're committed," says Hurst. "It's not just as simple as taking out a membership and all of a sudden you're certified. It takes the training of your workforce, the implementation of effective safe practices, and it takes work."

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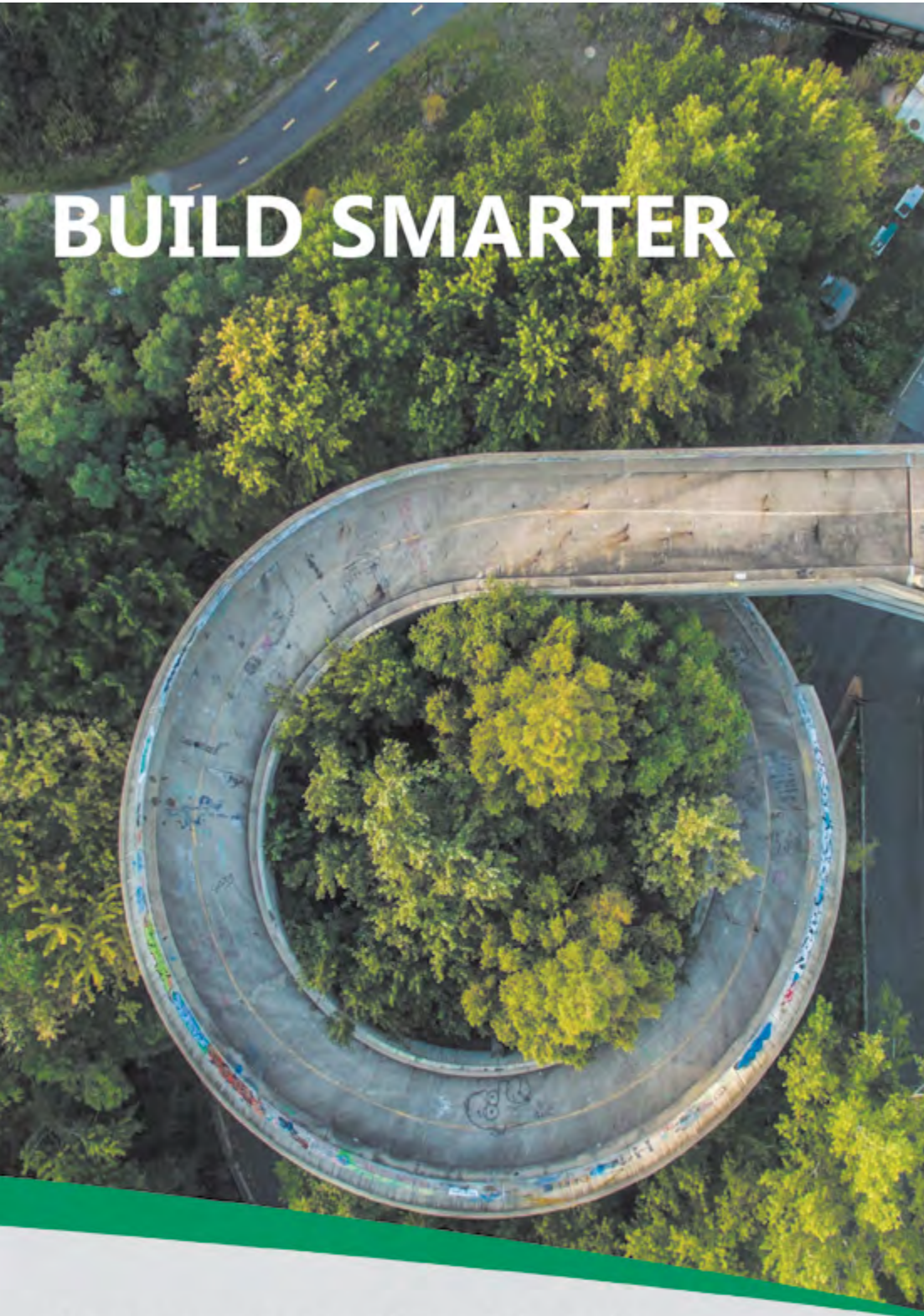


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