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Trade corridors investment IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

PTH1 and 1A interchange at Portage la Prairie. Graham Construction & Engineering photo



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

By Chris Lorenc

We're hearing a great deal about trade corridors these days, for good reason. The world is looking for what Canada has to sell. Demand is driven, in part, by the projected growth of the global middle class – from today's 1.8 billion to five billion by 2030, by some estimates – but also due to the thirst for the natural resources we possess, such as critical minerals, to fuel the technological advances driving what's being called the 4th industrial revolution.

This could be Canada's moment. But not if we can't deliver what we produce. On that point, those in the business of shipping and receiving are more than a little concerned.

Canada's ranking on a global survey of quality of trade transportation infrastructure is bad – we're ranked 32nd, below Azerbaijan. That 2019 survey result from the World Economic Forum looks worse when put up against our 2009 rank; we were 10th.

This is a national economic and security issue. More than 65% of our economy rides on trade, and trade rides on our

highways, rail and airline, and through our inland, border and marine ports. It's all got to be connected, seamless, efficient and reliable.

But as the WEF survey indicated, our customers and those relying on the trade transportation network have little faith we can get the goods to market.

We need to address that, now. Our competitors have signed the same trade agreements with developing markets and they've laid out the plans to ensure their trade infrastructure has the capacity to reliably deliver.

Canada's provinces entirely agree – the country needs a long-term, coordinated investment strategy for trade infrastructure. At their July meeting, the Premiers' Council of the Federation issued a communique calling on Prime Minister Trudeau to hold a First Ministers meeting on the issue of competitiveness and strategic infrastructure.

"Trade corridor infrastructure is critical to enhance and secure the vital supply chains, transportation networks, and market access needed to maximize our economic potential and prosperity," they said.

They endorsed the principles set out in the Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan proposed by the Business Council of Canada, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Canada West Foundation, Canadian Construction Association, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Civil Infrastructure Council Corporation, and the Western Canada Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association.

This is a critical issue for Manitoba. Sitting in the middle of Canada, this province has unequalled geographic advantages with trade routes in all four cardinal directions.

More than half of Manitoba's GDP flows from trade. We simply could not afford to fund our social programs and critical public services without the revenues trade spins off to the economy and, therefore, public coffers.

That's why the leaders of Manitoba's main political parties place a high priority on investing in Manitoba's trade corridors.

You'd be hard-pressed to find a provincial politician, on the campaign trail to October 3, who does not see the value of trade to Manitoba's economy, and the pent-up potential in the fact the province possesses 29 of the 31 critical minerals the world is clamoring for, including rare earth elements.

But elevating Manitoba's trade profile to seize on such opportunity requires a long-term strategy backed by sustained, significant investment in the provincial highways capital program.

It is time to upgrade the mandate of Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure as a key economic growth ministry by aligning investment plans with trade-based opportunities through a policy framework that prioritizes infrastructure investment through a highest ROI to GDP lens.

On the next page, you can read more about how those who are running to be your next premier would plan for economic growth, and investment to ensure Manitoba's provincial roads and highways can move people to jobs and goods to market.

When you come across your candidates for office in the next week, ask them to talk about their party's plans for investing in trade and trade infrastructure.

Our future prosperity rides on it.

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Heather Stefanson is Premier of Manitoba and Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

By Heather Stefanson

Every investment in strategic infrastructure creates new opportunities for Manitobans. Opportunity for the Indigenous

father who can now support his family with a good-paying job in a northern mine; opportunity for the newcomer in suburban Winnipeg who gets a new promotion at her local manufacturing company; and opportunity for the multigenerational family farm that can access new markets and thrive after years of adversity.

The same roads we travel to work carry the foundational elements of our economy, and we must make sure they are maintained and safe.

Transportation infrastructure – roads carry the economy

Since becoming Premier of Manitoba, our PC government has made infrastructure a top priority.

Our 5-year plan, released this spring, outlines our commitment to growing the economy through a historic investment of \$14 billion in new schools, hospitals, roads, housing, parks, airports, and water infrastructure. This includes a minimum of \$500 million annually into our provincial highways.

The majority of this targeted funding is dedicated to bolstering Manitoba's capacity for international trade as we respond to global economic uncertainties.

Amidst rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and international conflicts like the Ukraine crisis, international businesses see Manitoba as a stable place to invest. They are drawn by our historic tax cuts, low electricity rates, and record mineral exploration investments.

Most importantly, they see Manitoba's transformation into a globally recognized trade and transportation hub. Our strategic geographic location at the heart of North America, coupled with access to tidewater at the Port of Churchill, give us, and them, unique advantages.

We are harnessing these advantages with investments that improve our highway system and strengthen our supply chains.

At the core of our 5-year plan is a commitment to stable and predictable infrastructure investments so that our

industry partners can build the capacity to meet future construction demands. This includes developing national trade corridors, an improved trade and commerce grid, and the transformation of Winnipeg's Perimeter Highway into a true freeway, mirroring the U.S. Interstate model.

The National Trade Corridors Strategy within our plan prioritizes the safety and efficiency of Manitoba's critical trade routes, beginning with the twinning of Highway 1 from Falcon Lake to the Ontario border – a long overdue project that will enhance safety and trade capacity.

In the coming years, we aim to develop a sustainable northern economic corridor through to the Hudson Bay coast, enabling the export of key resources from across Western Canada.

Our 5-year plan aligns with our vision of making Manitoba a global destination for trade and investment. This vision includes the development of two ports to facilitate global trade.

We have already invested \$40 million to expand CentrePort, North America's largest inland port and foreign trade zone, which will attract more than \$1 billion in investment once completed. Additionally, we have invested \$74 million in the Hudson Bay rail line to the Port of Churchill, unlocking the potential to transport Western Canadian commodities to European markets. We are also supporting the redevelopment of the Thompson airport with a \$20-million

investment, the only provincial government to do so in over 25 years.

Over the past year, our government has established the Manitoba Strategic Corridors Advisory Council to inform and support our approach to advancing economic growth with the first-hand expertise and experience of industry. This work supports the memorandum of understanding signed with Alberta and Saskatchewan to advance economic corridors and support the movement of goods and services within Western Canada.

Nationally, I have proudly led efforts in advocating for more federal investments in Manitoba's strategic infrastructure. In July, I joined with premiers across Canada to urge the Prime Minister to convene a First Ministers' Meeting to discuss a national infrastructure strategy and funding.

We can only get our commodities and products to market more efficiently than ever before by working together.

As the provincial election nears, I urge you to reflect on which leader, and which party, you trust to invest in the critical infrastructure that will power our economy. Our government is listening, we're taking action, and we're getting the job done for your industry. Through our continued partnership, I am confident we will grow our economy and create endless opportunities for all Manitobans.



Wab Kinew is leader of the official Opposition and the New Democratic Party of Manitoba

By Wab Kinew

Growing the economy to attract new businesses and create good jobs is one of the most important goals of any government. A

Manitoba NDP government will work with all sectors to ensure Manitoba is a competitive place for businesses to grow and thrive,

supporting an excellent quality of life for families across the province.

Trade is one of the foundations of Manitoba's economy. And trade can only take place when we have a reliable transportation system that allows producers to reach markets in Canada and around the world.

To expand and maintain our transportation system, the Manitoba NDP will provide consistent, healthy investment in highways, roads and bridges to restore and maintain the province's transportation infrastructure.

A significant portion of Manitoba's trade is with other countries. But not all companies and producers have the ability to fully access these markets. This is a job the PC Government, under Heather Stefanson, has failed to properly prioritize.

We will work with industry to expand markets for Manitoba products and champion our businesses, especially in trade with the United States.

To achieve our shared goals, the

construction industry needs predictability and proper funding from government. The Stefanson government cut the infrastructure budget by hundreds of millions of dollars, and we know it will take a significant effort to help repair the damage.

The Manitoba NDP will work together with industry partners to plan for the short, medium, and long-term, building on existing \$500 million annual commitments. We will provide timely information on upcoming projects and invest every year to build the roads, highways and buildings of the future.

Without skilled workers, infrastructure projects can't be completed on time and on budget. The Manitoba NDP will expand training programs to increase the supply of apprentices, journeypersons and other skilled workers in the trades. In particular, we will work with stakeholders to diversify the workforce to take advantage of untapped skills and to include more women, Indigenous people and new Canadians.

In terms of moving projects forward,

not all municipalities have the strong tax base needed to meet core infrastructure needs. The Manitoba NDP will work with municipalities to ensure they have strong fiscal foundations so they can develop the infrastructure they need to thrive. After seven years of frozen municipal funding under the Stefanson PC Government, we know we need a change in direction.

Manitoba has always enjoyed an advantage when it comes to clean and affordable hydro energy and many firms have settled here to take advantage of that competitive edge. The Manitoba NDP will develop more sources of green energy to ensure continued low costs for industries and stimulate growth well into the future, while also addressing the climate crisis.

The Manitoba NDP look forward to working with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and other industry partners to move towards a shared vision for a thriving and sustainable economy where families can raise their children and enjoy a bright future.

Supporting business, supporting trade in Manitoba

entrepreneurs for decades, and a refusal to invest in the basic infrastructure that benefits everyone.

The best way to grow and build both personal and community wealth in this province, so we can all be more self-reliant, is to invest in starting and growing more independent, Manitoba-owned businesses.

It is sometimes argued that the reason Manitoba faces economic challenges is that Manitoba's public sector is too large compared to its private sector.

The top-down solution is to shrink the public sector – through attrition, cuts, freezes and layoffs. This doesn't translate into new businesses or a richer private sector – it shrinks the whole economy, because Manitobans and businesses alike don't have services they need.

Instead of investing local business and infrastructure, NDP and PC governments have routinely committed hundreds of millions of dollars in public subsidies, grants and one-off tax arrangements to subsidize companies from outside of Manitoba. The PCs offered \$1.7-billion to Amazon to locate here.

The Manitoba Liberal vision to increasing

prosperity and building wealth is about growing a stronger Manitoba economy from the grassroots up, instead of from the top down: growing independent Manitoba businesses across the province will make us stronger and more self-reliant, while our infrastructure investments should aim for minimal environmental impact.

Our solution to access to capital is to create a politically independent Manitoba Business Development Bank, with \$100-million/year in funds. It would be equity, not debt-based and provide access to entrepreneurs to start up and scale up.

We will provide Manitoba businesses and farms with new tools for debt relief, including a new Manitoba Debt Compromise Board (MDCB) which would help borrowers unload burdensome debt to set the stage for future growth. We want to keep farmers on the farm and owners in the business.

We are also proposing immediate investments to rebuild our services and infrastructure – to generate growth and future revenues.

We will invest in strategic trade infrastructure and corridors that increase the efficiency and movement of goods

through Manitoba, with CentrePort Canada, Churchill, and Emerson being three critical ports. With inflation and rising costs, there is real urgency in getting these projects done, and we will ensure MTI plays a long-term strategic planning role.

Trade goes both ways. Manitoba must be making, adding value to and exporting our own goods as well as moving others. That means focusing on value-added production and a commitment to food, medical and energy security.

We have committed to Indigenous engagement through the creation of an Indigenous Secretariat so that policies are developed with Indigenous consultation, input and partnership.

We are also committed to improving funding to Municipalities – and one example is our proposed \$300-million annual Green Fund, which would fund environmental projects that fight climate change. Municipalities would be eligible for grants for infrastructure upgrades, energy retrofits, as well as rewilding, tree planting and conservation.

We are the only party offering a real choice for real change on Manitoba's economy.



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By MHCA

The next provincial government must be focused on growing the economy, to tackle social challenges – homelessness and addictions – and provide relief for Manitobans facing a rising cost of living, all three leaders of the three main political parties agreed September 12.

The party leaders laid out their economic platforms, and acknowledged the need for revenues that would be spun off from economic growth to fund core services, at the All Party Leaders Forum – Growing the Economy, hosted by nine leading Manitoba business groups, before some 260 people.

In a comprehensive discussion – moderated by CJOB's Richard Cloutier and Probe Research's Mary Agnes Welch – leaders Heather Stefanson (PC), Wab Kinew (NDP) and Dougald Lamont (Lib) noted general inflation means Manitobans are struggling to keep money in their pockets.

As with the need to rebuild critical health and education services and supports, addressing broader social issues, they agreed, requires government to invest in the drivers of wealth to create jobs and generate higher revenues from taxes.

The parties have individual approaches but agreed there are key elements necessary to expand business and trade, thereby generating jobs and higher incomes.

On the issue of trade infrastructure, Stefanson and Kinew committed unreservedly to expanding Kenaston Boulevard, a key transportation route in Winnipeg, and extending Chief Peguis Trail in the city's northwest quadrant. Lamont said 'yes' to Chief Peguis but wants to see a "better business case" for widening Kenaston, which he said would amount to building a highway through the city.

The breakfast forum was hosted by the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters-Mb, Manitoba Home Builders' Association, Urban Development Institute, Business Council of Manitoba, Winnipeg Construction Association, Merit Manitoba, Manitoba Trucking Association and the Manitoba Real Estate Association, and has been the only election campaign forum to focus expressly on economic growth.

Stefanson went further to say she would continue to champion a national trade corridor initiative to bring Ottawa to the table on a multi-year investment strategy. As premier, Stefanson was a driving force behind advancing the Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan, a campaign by leading Canadian business organizations, including the MHCA through the Western Canada Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association.

Kinew said trade transportation investment is a key pillar in his party's recognition that "the economic horse pulls the social cart," adding his government would rebuild Manitoba's health care facilities and trade corridors as part of its infrastructure plans.

Lamont said a Liberal government would step away from what he has seen as a massive growth of government involvement in the economy, let private enterprise drive growth, assisted by a development bank that opens access to capital.

Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba's wealth of critical minerals and potential as a "green energy" producer all found special mention by each party leader as future economic power. Lamont said he wants to see more of Manitoba's raw materials and commodities developed here before being shipped out to customers world-wide. Kinew said Manitoba can do more to develop the green economy to capitalize on exporting hydrogen and hydroelectricity and, as premier, he would focus on strengthening the province's trade relationships, especially with the United States.

On homelessness, Stefanson said the solution will require a community effort, but also the involvement of Ottawa; Kinew vowed his party will fix chronic homelessness. Lamont said it has to do with ensuring people have a minimum basic income, that child welfare services work and that income assistance programs "don't pay people to stay at home and not work."

"I think it's important that, as a main takeaway from the forum, each party leader acknowledges that growing the economy is job number 1," MHCA President & CEO Chris Lorenz said. "We know that without the increased revenues a growing economy returns to government, discussing improved programs for health, education, infrastructure and other core services is moot."

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Closing the infrastructure gap can mean **A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ALL CANADIANS**



Perrin Beatty is President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

After experiencing so many disruptions to our fragile supply chains over the past few years, Canadians know that our economy is only as strong as its weakest link. Families across the country are becoming more accustomed to understocked store shelves and a rapidly rising cost of living. The flow of goods in, out, and across Canada has been repeatedly interrupted by wildfires, floods, or the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to labour disruptions that hobble our supply chains.

To fix these problems Canada needs a long-term plan to ensure the reliable flow of goods, stability for Canadian businesses, and economic certainty for Canadian families.

We are at an inflexion point. We need to decide where we want to go, and we need to act to stem the decline in our leadership on the international stage and in our share of the global economy. In the new global trade economy, we will either lead or we will lose.

Being able to compete internationally in a global economy where competition grows by the day is critical to our national well-being and to the financial security of every Canadian. Our competitiveness and reputation in international markets depend on having reliable transportation infrastructure to transport goods efficiently and speedily. However, many of our competitors have built infrastructures that are pulling significantly ahead of Canada's.

The World Economic Forum Competitiveness Index shows Canada's transport infrastructure in serious decline over the past decade or more. Our ranking fell from its peak of 10th in the world in 2008, to 32nd in 2019. It has likely worsened since then.

Canada's infrastructure is our economy's arterial system. It makes it possible for us to participate in trade and grow the economy. But for the last years, we've been spending infrastructure, faster than we've been investing in it.

We require a clear plan. Governments simply don't have enough money to do everything that's required, so we need to set priorities. Most importantly, our political leaders need to show that they understand what every small businessperson and every household knows: there's a significant difference between spending money and investing it. Too often our tax dollars disappear from sight as soon as the cheque is written. In contrast, genuine investments bring clear economic returns.

Canada is rich in the natural resources and commodities the world is thirsting for – potash, agricultural products and critical minerals, for example – but we need infrastructure that can deliver the goods to market dependably and on time. The combination of a clear infrastructure strategy and badly needed reforms to our costly, duplicative and slow regulatory system are needed so we can get our products to global markets.

Governments can't continue to pay for the transition to net zero, health care, old age security, defence, and any number of other policies and programs by writing cheques on a bank account that's already overdrawn. Meeting these goals will require strong economic growth that can only come from a healthy private sector. With the right economic and regulatory policies, we can unlock billions of dollars of growth-producing private sector investment. The starting point must be a clear plan and a genuine partnership between business and government that can unblock the regulatory system and overcome our infrastructure deficit.

Getting Canada's house in order is both an obligation and an opportunity. More than ever, Canada produces what the world needs. We have a duty to use our abundance of resources to assist in meeting the world's requirements for food, energy and other critical supplies. And, by helping others secure what they urgently need, we will create opportunity for Canadians as well.

A healthy infrastructure system will both help our producers get their goods to market and assist businesses that need to import critical inputs or to get goods from abroad to meet the needs of Canadian families.

The deficiencies in Canada's logistics system are serious. Left unaddressed, they will inflict a growing economic cost. However, these shortcomings are fixable if we are prepared to work together to develop a coherent strategy and demonstrate the political will across all levels of government to act on it.

None of us should have any doubt that our geography, our rich resource inheritance, and the strength of our people make us the most fortunate country in the world. It's in our hands to use that good fortune to build a more prosperous future for all of our citizens.

TRADE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS HELP: CANADIANS

- 95% view Canada's trade infrastructure, like highways, ports, railroads and airports, and a skilled workforce as important to Canada's economy; but almost four in 10 (38%) say Canada's trade infrastructure is in poor or bad shape.
- 94% place a high degree of importance on supply chains, labour supply, internal trade; 92% for international trade
- Yet few Canadians know the degree to which Canada's economy is dependent on international trade – when asked to guess, respondents said 50.5%. It's actually more than 65%
- 93% Canadians strongly (55%) or somewhat (38%) agree that, given how important trade is to Canada, we need to prioritize making sure our trade infrastructure can effectively move people to jobs and products to market
- 94% of Canadians strongly (54%) or somewhat (40%) agree Canadian governments and industry need to work together to create a national plan to invest in building and maintaining long-term, trade infrastructure
- 92% are concerned that without a strategic and long-term plan, taxpayer dollars for trade infrastructure investments may not be spent wisely
- 91% think Canada's level of investment in trade infrastructure should be proportional to that of other G7 countries
- 87% find it concerning Canada has dropped from 10th in 2009 to 32nd (behind Azerbaijan) in 2019 in the World Economic Forum's ranking of quality of transportation infrastructure
- 88% find it concerning that among major trading economies like the US, the EU, the UK and Australia, Canada is the only one that does not have a long-term trade infrastructure plan

Ipsos poll conducted between June 2 and June 5, 2023, for the Canadian Construction Association
<https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/over-90-canadians-think-trade-important-yet-only-9-think-infrastructure-in-good-shape>



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Recycling construction waste: MOVING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



CRD Task Force news conference at Rocky Road Recycling. MHCA photo

The need to reuse CRD waste materials

- Construction, renovation and demolition materials are heavy – sometimes 10% to 25% of municipal solid waste, depending on economic activity
- Manitoba has committed, through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, to reduce per capita waste to 490 kg per year, by 2030
- Preserving landfill capacity is a priority
- Recycling CRD waste materials would contribute to economic circularity
- Metro Vancouver is the best example of a jurisdiction which has encouraged the diversion of CR&D waste, with wood-waste bans supported by wood-waste processing; drywall bans supported by drywall processing, and others



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



Colleen Sklar was named CEO of JohnQ in June, having led the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region since 2010

By Colleen Sklar and Chris Lorenc

This summer's extreme weather is more evidence of the urgency to reduce our carbon footprint.

To that end, the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region and the heavy construction industry are working with the provincial government to reduce pressure on our finite, natural resources and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Construction, renovation and demolition (CRD) materials comprise the second largest waste stream in Manitoba, representing an estimated 20 to 30% of total waste. Given the significant environmental impact of producing such materials, it doesn't make sense to dump what can be re-used.

Other countries are leading the way, recovering and recycling construction materials, including shingles, wood, drywall, asphalt, metal, bricks and concrete, to help move to a 'circular economy'.

The heavy construction industry in Manitoba has pursued recycling: recovering water used in the production of aggregates; reusing crushed concrete aggregates pulled up in road projects; reprocessing asphalt from some roofing shingles or bituminous blacktop in paving roads.

But these efforts amount to minimal diversion of the total CRD waste sent to landfill. More than 30,000 tonnes of roofing shingles, alone, are dumped each year.

In June, Environment and Climate Minister Kevin Klein announced the launch of a task force, chaired by WMR and MHCA, to find new ways of diverting CRD waste from municipal landfills.

There are numerous materials that could be recovered and reused from broader construction activities to promote resource management and environmental stewardship.

The goals align with the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region's draft Plan 20-50, which will establish a regional approach supporting waste minimization, diversion and recycling.

Building resiliency in the metropolitan region is a key objective in WMR's Plan 20-50. The WMR is the hub through which Winnipeg and the 17 surrounding municipalities can plan, coordinate and execute joint municipal services, planning and development, including infrastructure projects.

The Winnipeg Metropolitan Region has a significant way to go in the adoption of new

strategies to deal with our waste. In fact, it has one of the lowest recycling rates in all of Canada and construction, demolition and renovation waste is a really solid place to start.

Concrete is one of the world's most consumed materials after water, and it contributes significantly to the waste stream. By developing regional strategies and aligning efforts, local governments can reduce the pressure on their landfills, as well as the demand for virgin natural resources, while using less water and energy.

The launch of the task force June 9 was held at Rocky Road Recycling, where waste concrete aggregate is stockpiled for crushing. Rebar and other materials are separated out, so the aggregates – rock, sand and stone – can be extracted and sized for reuse in roadbuilding, parking lots or other infrastructure projects.

Recycled concrete aggregates (RCAs) have been used in roadbuilding in Manitoba for about 20 years. The MHCA is involved in discussions with the City of Winnipeg Public Works department toward increasing the use of RCAs, which are allowed in the construction of sidewalks, active transportation paths, alleys and some residential streets.

There is growing support and impetus to recover and repurpose materials, diverting them from landfills.

A recent review of Manitoba's recycling policies and programs suggested revenues collected from the provincial levy (\$10/tonne) on landfill disposals should be earmarked for waste diversion and recycling activities rather than to support landfill operations.

"Using the funding to support disposal activities should not be permitted," said the March 2021 report by Dillon consulting. "Programs should support diversion from disposal activities and report on funded project outcomes; e.g., tonnes diverted, impact of program, GHG, and lessons learned."

The Construction, Renovation and Demolition Task Force, which will include participation from the City of Winnipeg, Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Winnipeg Construction Association and the Manitoba Home Builders' Association, will submit a report with recommendations to the Manitoba government in the fall.

Canada's competitiveness needs SERIOUS ATTENTION

We're Losing Out on Investment and Growth

We all pay a price for regulatory inefficiency and project delays. If a country can't approve major projects in a timely way, investment dollars will go elsewhere and projects will be cancelled. Canada ranks dead last among advanced economies in growth of incomes per person between now and 2030 and will remain in last place until 2060.



Source: "The Long Game: Fiscal Outlooks to 2060 Underline Need for Structural Reform"; OECD, October 2021

Canada's Investment Inflows and Outflows

Last Year in Which Canada Attracted More Foreign Direct Investment Than it Made **2013**

Foreign Direct Investment in Canada as a % of Canadian Investment Abroad in 2022 **63%**

Source: StatsCan Table: 36-10-0025-01



Yvette Milner is President of Merit Contractors Association of Manitoba

By Yvette Milner

Canada's economy rides on productivity – especially its ability to develop our natural wealth and move it to market globally. But regulatory barriers threaten to rob our country of its potential, at a time when the world thirsts for our resources.

In the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business analysis, regulatory efficiency is a glaring weak spot for Canada, with permitting and regulatory procedures for even a simple construction project taking much longer and costing much more than elsewhere.

Canada ranks 64th on a comparison of efficiency in construction permitting; the US is 24th. It takes, on average, 249 days to obtain permits, licences and clearances to build a warehouse in Canada; the average for similar high-income countries is 152 days.

In large development projects, the drag on permitting is measured in years, not days.

Canada takes almost 18 years, on average, to get all phases of a mine development through to completion, more than two years longer than a 23-country average and four years longer than in the US, according to the S&P Global Market Intelligent Analysis in June, 2023.

We all pay a price for regulatory inefficiency and project delays. If a country can't approve major projects in a timely way, investment dollars will go elsewhere

and projects will be cancelled and that affects incomes of ordinary Canadians. Canada ranks dead last among advanced economies in growth of incomes per person between now and 2030 and will remain in last place until 2060.

Hand in hand with productivity growth is the need to move goods to market – trade is 65% of our national GDP; governments rely on trade's revenue to fund core public services, such as health care and education.

Trade rides on highways and regional roads. However, both provincial and municipal governments are overburdened by "infrastructure deficits" that have built up – that is, infrastructure built in the post-war period is now at the end of its life-cycle, in dire need of repair.

The federal government has greater fiscal capacity to partner in funding agreements to get Canada building – and moving -- again. The nation needs a new, federal long-term infrastructure investment program.

This should be Canada's golden era, with rising demand for our commodities – especially, critical minerals and energy – and significant growth predicted in the global middle class, which means booming markets for our goods and services.


We have an incredible endowment of energy and other natural resources in this country. And whether it's low-carbon conventional fuels, emerging energy solutions like hydrogen, or a range of critical minerals, global markets are clamouring for them.

Yet the federal government has an almost cavalier attitude to the nation-building opportunities before us, and is seemingly determined to tie up projects in regulatory complexity that slows them down and adds costs. In more cases than not, projects simply don't proceed at all.


The clock is ticking on one of the most important promises in the last federal budget – a commitment to produce "a concrete plan to improve the efficiency of the impact assessment and permitting processes for major projects" by the end of this calendar year.

Canadians need to see the federal plan now, back by serious financial commitment, to get nation-building projects off the ground again.

More information on Merit Canada's position on competitiveness can be found here <https://merit-canada.ca/sites/>.



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Jessie Smith is MHCA WORKSAFELY Education Programs Coordinator

construction companies said among the priorities for recruiting workers are awareness – seeing more applications for jobs posted – and reliability.

The respondents also noted heavy construction companies are having to attract workers through competitive wages, as other industries are similarly finding it difficult to recruit.

The survey results suggested that more needs to be done to raise awareness about the various types of jobs, the conditions, hours of work and the benefits of working seasonally. The respondents noted that potential recruits could be attracted by the many benefits of the job that go alongside the responsibilities.

What's intriguing about working in heavy construction is no two days are the same and you will be challenged, mentally and physically.

The other attractive part is that a new, entry-level worker does not need post-secondary education. For too long, the message ingrained during school and at home for so many people was that to be successful in your career, you must go to university. Now, it is recognized that well-paying jobs and rewarding careers are available in construction, without the need for a degree or certification.

Jeremy Shebaylo, directional drill locator for Crown Pipeline Ltd., attended university after high-school, only to realize that style of learning wasn't for him. He then turned to heavy construction for an opportunity to make money and grow his skillset.

"I didn't enjoy university the way I saw everyone else enjoying it. I knew that life wasn't for me," Shebaylo says. "When I turned to heavy construction, I started as a labourer and started to really enjoy it."

After Shebaylo made his way as a labourer and the company saw he was showing up every day and working hard, he was trained to be a fuser, and in a short time, became a directional drill locator.

"The opportunities are endless," Shebaylo says. "Now I make over \$80,000 a year in heavy construction."

As the workforce ages out and new opportunities present themselves, now is the best time to start a career in heavy construction.

The heavy construction industry is hungry for workers, from entry-level positions, all the way to project managers. John Highmoor, chair of the MHCA Workforce Development Committee, says there is one thing that sets our industry – why it should be attractive to new workers – apart. "In our industry, there is a lot of opportunities to develop your skills through on-the-job training. This results in career advancement and higher wages all while you are getting paid to train, develop and learn," says Highmoor, Vice-president of Tri-Core Projects. "Our industry realizes that productive workers are the key to success. As a result, we are excited to provide the resources needed to train and develop our staff." Heavy construction differs from other industries as most jobs are not journey-person based; here you earn as you learn. Companies have the tools and equipment to train their employees on-the-job to help excel them in their careers. What companies in the heavy construction industry look for are individuals who are ready to work hard, diligently, and eager to move up into the many higher-level positions that are open. In a recent MHCA survey, heavy



SKILLED OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND IN THE HEAVY CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Construction starts with shovels in the ground, and that can't happen without the highly skilled and dedicated people in our industry. The careers below are vital to the industry's ability to meet the expectations of project owners, public sector and private sector alike.

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION WORKER

Skilled construction workers perform a wide variety of manual labour responsibilities, including:

- Working closely with and supporting other specialized positions within the crew such as concrete finishers, pipelayers or equipment operators
- Pre-check, operate and maintain small, powered equipment and hand tools
- Rigging and hoisting activities
- Load, unload and move construction materials around the worksite
- Perform housekeeping duties and maintain materials and work areas
- Ability to lift 30kg (66lbs) on a regular basis
- Ensure a safe work environment in compliance with all safety policies and procedures using the appropriate tools and equipment for the task

Salary range: \$16.44 - \$32 per hour
Average annual 2,500 hours including overtime: \$41,100 - \$80,000

PIPELAYER

A pipelayer is a skilled occupation that lays pipe, such as for storm sewers, sanitary sewers, drains, and water mains. Pipelayers assemble and connect pipe systems for water mains, sewers and drains. As part of the sewer and water installations, pipelayers are involved in understanding the alignment and grades of required pipe installations and assure all trenches are excavated to proper line and grade as well as assuring the proper backfill materials and processes are used:

- Understand the existing utility locates in and around your work area prior to excavating
- Installation of piping, fittings, valves, catch basins and manholes using an assortment of tools, including transit levels, grade rods and levels
- Assure line and grade is set where pipes are to be installed; cut the pipes to match the area
- Connect multiple pipes by butting method for PVC pipe and/or fusing method for HDPE pipe
- Assure proper backfilling materials and processes once pipes are in place
- Train and supervise new pipelayers to ensure they are able to work independently
- Drill holes into a property's pipeline to install auxiliary cables and other devices into the system
- Operate pickup trucks and rollers to transport materials from the worksite

Salary range: \$17.97 - \$35.62 per hour
Average annual 2,500 hours including overtime: \$44,925 - \$89,050

CLASS 1 / LOW-BED OPERATORS

Class 1 / Low-bed operators operate a truck with a box-trailer, lowboy or flat trailer to move heavy equipment and construction materials/supplies to/from construction job sites. Responsibilities include:

- Operate and drive primarily tractor-trailer, long-combination vehicle and straight-body trucks weighing over 4500 kg to transport goods and materials
- Transporting heavy equipment and materials safely and efficiently on public highways
- Loading equipment on and off of the low bed truck and following site safety rules and regulations
- Perform pre-trip and post-trip inspection of vehicle systems and equipment accessories
- Maintaining logbooks and time sheets in an accurate and timely manner
- Ensure cargo is properly secured in accordance with safety requirements and follow safety procedures for transporting dangerous goods
- Follow D.O.T. Regulations
- Must have a valid class 1 driver's license with air endorsement

Salary range: \$26.90 - \$33.48 per hour
Average annual 2,000 hours including overtime: \$53,800 - \$66,960

HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATORS

Heavy equipment operators operate heavy equipment used in the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, sewer and water installations, airports, gas and oil pipelines, tunnels, buildings and other structures; in surface mining and quarrying activities. Responsibilities of this role include:

- Operate heavy equipment such as: Backhoe loaders, excavators, crawler dozers, bulldozers, rubber-tired loaders, articulated rock trucks compaction equipment and graders to excavate, move, load and grade earth, rock, gravel or other materials during construction and related activities
- Bulldozers or other heavy equipment to clear brush and stumps prior to logging activities and to build roads at logging and surface mining sites
- Pile-drivers to drive piling into earth to provide support for buildings, bridges or other structures
- Dredging equipment to deepen waterways or reclaim earth fill
- Paving and surfacing equipment to lay, spread or compact concrete, asphalt and other surface materials during highway and road construction
- Power shovels to excavate rock, ore or other materials from open-pit mines, strip mines, quarries or construction pit
- Articulated rock trucks to transport materials in off-road conditions
- Operate heavy equipment to move, load and unload cargo
- Conduct pre-operational checks on equipment and clean, lubricate and refill equipment
- Be able to read and understand construction drawings and survey layout

Salary range: \$20.43 – \$39.90 per hour
Average annual 2,500 hours including overtime: \$51,075 - \$99,750

CONCRETE FINISHER

A concrete finisher is a skilled occupation that places, finishes and protects poured concrete, and repairs concrete in engineering and construction projects e.g. floors, sidewalks, roads. Concrete finishers set the concrete forms, ensuring the correct depth and pitch. Key responsibilities include:

- Prepare the subgrade by levelling and packing prior to concrete work
- Levelling the surface of freshly poured concrete
- Operating a power vibrator to compact concrete
- Applying hardening and sealing compounds to cure the surface
- Waterproofing, damp-proofing, and restoring concrete surfaces
- Installing anchor bolts, steel, plates and related fixtures in freshly poured concrete
- Repair, resurface and replace worn or damaged sections of floors, walls, roads and other concrete structures

Salary range: \$29.48 – \$35.52 per hour
Average annual 1,500 hours including overtime: \$44,200 - \$53,330

DIRECTIONAL DRILL AND LOCATOR OPERATOR

A directional drill operator sets up and completes drilling variable-sized, underground holes and pulls back required conduit. They may be required to operate machinery to drill wells at multiple angles rather than just horizontally. Key responsibilities include:

- Accurately reads and interprets project plans, diagrams and locates
- Safe set up of equipment including drill and water truck
- Operating horizontal directional drills
- Operators the locator to assist directional drill operator
- Confirming with locator bore path to drill
- Safe set up of equipment including drill and water truck
- Maintaining records for accurate daily drilling activities

Salary range: \$25.00 – \$36.00
Average annual 1,800 hours including overtime: \$45,000 - \$64,800



SLOW DOWN, STAY SAFE IN CONSTRUCTION ZONES

Colin Corneau photo



Jessie Smith is MHCA WORKSAFELY Education Programs Coordinator



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Fall is a crucial time for the heavy construction industry to complete projects as the construction season comes to an end. With crews working extended hours to get the job done, motorists and commuters may get further frustrated with delays and detours.

With that, comes the chance angry or impatient drivers will put our workers at risk.

Construction workers work long hours day in and day out to fix our roads, or repair water and wastewater pipes. And they deserve the same respect everyone should receive at their workplace.

The numerous road projects this year have triggered an increase in “disrespectful and often downright dangerous behaviour” from drivers toward road-work crews, according to a City of Winnipeg news release in August.

The behaviour was noticed by the companies whose employees are on-site, trying to do their jobs and get home safely at the end of the day.

“There’s been a noticeable increase in aggressive driving — very aggressive — and abusive behaviour towards construction workers, and people accelerating, spitting,” says Chris Lorenc, President & CEO of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association.

Drivers have been seen ignoring barricades, driving through active construction zones and distracted on their phone, says Lorenc, who also chairs the SAFE Roads Committee.

Drivers need to recognize that they’re travelling through someone’s workplace.

“Imagine if you were at the office by the photocopy machine and all of a sudden a 2,000-pound vehicle whizzes by you. It would cause you some alarm.”

Rene Grenier, foreman for Crown Pipeline Ltd., says his crew works on main roads and witnesses distracted drivers every day.

“We discuss distracted drivers and road rage in our hazard assessments every morning because every day we run into the same thing: drivers angry that we are there working, doing our jobs,” Grenier says.

“We wouldn’t go into their work place and treat them with disrespect, and we expect the same.”

Trevor Shwaluk is a Safety Advisor for MHCA’S WORKSAFELY® program and is the lead instructor for WORKSAFELY®’s flagger certification. Over the years, he has heard of numerous accounts of dangerous and distracted driving in road construction zones.

He says motorists need to take steps to ensure no one gets hurt, inadvertently, while driving in work zones, including:

- Slow down, watch for workers and drive with caution
- Put your phone down, observe speed limits and abide by road signs; they are there for a reason
- Keep a safe distance between yourself and the driver ahead of you; be ready to stop suddenly
- Listen to traffic reports and give yourself extra time to get to your destination
- And always respect road workers

“By doing your part and driving cautiously through our construction sites, our workers can safely do their part and repair our roads,” says Shwaluk. “The construction season is really quite short, and workers need to utilize the time they have to get the job done.”

“We simply ask that motorists slow down, take care and obey the directions,” adds Lorenc.

“Our crews are hard at work and, at the end of a long day, they want to get home safe and whole, just like everyone else.”

The SAFE Roads Committee will be addressing this issue at their coming meeting this fall.

Stay alert and focused driving through construction zones this season, and always abide by road signs.



PROTECTIVE EYEWEAR AN ESSENTIAL SAFETY STEP AT HOME



Andrea Guimond is a WORKSAFELY® advisor at MHCA



Having the ability to see is a blessing. When we are at work, we typically follow a set of rules that outline how we should be protecting this vital sense.

However, when we are working in the comfort of our own home, we often go for convenience and forget about the important role of personal protection equipment. As a result, we put our eyesight at risk.

The best approach is to control for hazards, but when risks can’t be eliminated we must use protective equipment, such as safety goggles.

The tasks at hand may be smaller in size, but still carry a measure of risk. Some of the tasks for which we should use eye protection at home are:

- Trimming weeds with handheld equipment
- House cleaning with household or toxic chemicals
- Painting
- Using a leaf-blower to clean loose and light debris that can become airborne
- Cutting pieces of wood or lumber
- Handling brush
- Using an angle grinder
- Doing work around or under a vehicle

It is common to adopt the mentality in the comfort of your own home that it is less likely to become injured. Incidents do happen, but for the most part they can be prevented.

What is the safety plan should something happen? Who will drive you to a medical facility if something were to get in your eye(s)?

MHCA WORKSAFELY® Advisor Randy Olynick says protective equipment at home “is not used as often as it should” and notes “it only takes a bit of dust” for something harmful to happen to your eye.

The best way to protect your eyes from incident is to use a safety certified pair of eye protection. To confirm that your safety eyewear is certified, look for the CSA (Canadian Standards Association) label on the package and on the eyewear itself. These glasses offer impact resistant lenses.

It is important to note that safety eyewear is not one size fits all. Safety eyewear comes in a few different shades and with different styles of frames for a better fit for your face shape. There is also different safety eyewear for different tasks, such as: chemicals, laser radiation, molten materials, flying objects, dust and wind, etc.

If you wear prescription glasses, you fit a pair of safety eyewear over top. There is also the option of going to your optometrist to discuss options to fit your needs.

It is tempting to jump right into a task, especially the small ones we think will only take a second. However, it only takes a second for an incident to happen. So, let’s stop and reassess before we end up with a recipe for disaster.

Take the time to ask ourselves questions as to how to get the task at hand done safely, such as, which type of task you are doing and which type of glasses you will need to protect your blessing, your eye sight.



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COR®

– a safety certification that stands above them all



Jessie Smith is MHCA WORKSAFELY Education Programs Coordinator

The heavy construction industry has a suite of safety and health training courses and certifications, but one that stands above them all is the Certificate of Recognition®.

COR® is an occupational safety and health accreditation program that verifies a fully implemented safety and health management system which meets national standards.

"When a company chooses to be COR® certified, it demonstrates an invested commitment and recognized importance for the safety and health of its employees by the ownership of a company," says Chrissy Hildebrand, safety and health representative at Horizons Earthworks.

COR®'s main goal is to provide industry employers with effective tools to develop, implement, assess and promote continual improvement of their safety and health program, in turn, preventing or mitigating incidents and injuries, along with their associated human and financial costs.

The COR® program isn't just about protecting one company, it's about protecting everyone.

"The COR® program helps to make sure nothing is overlooked when it comes to protecting your workers, subcontractors or the public who may be affected by your work," says Hildebrand. "Safety excellence should not be the exception in our industry but the standard we all strive for."

Trevor Shwaluk, Safety Advisor at WORKSAFELY®, describes COR® as "a stamp of approval that you are doing everything reasonably practical to ensure

the highest degree of safety at your workplace."

The benefits to being COR® certified include:

- Holding your safety culture to the highest standards
- Maintaining industry leadership
- Reduction in incident rates in the workplace
- Lower WCB premiums
- Advantage to more work as COR® companies qualify ahead of uncertified companies for certain jobs

Not only does COR® stand tall to MHCA, it also stands tall to company safety leaders.

Mike Burtnick, Safety Manager for Maple Leaf Construction Ltd., sees two major benefits of COR® certification.

"First off, it makes for a more level playing field as far as safety requirements on projects," Burtnick says. "Large contractors that require COR® to submit bids for their project level the playing field because all contractors use the same certification."

"Secondly, COR® sets standards, guidelines and requirements that are easy to follow to develop your safety program."

Don Hurst, Director of MHCA's WORKSAFELY® education and training, says the program provides companies with the assurance they are meeting the industry-accepted, minimum approach to maintaining and promoting safety in their workplaces.

Being COR® certified means your company takes care of workers by meeting legislation requirements and promoting a safe workplace. It also means you have access to many valuable resources, like training.

"The COR® program fosters a positive safety culture where workers feel valued and have the confidence to perform their jobs, knowing they have the training, knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe," says Hildebrand.

COR® certification is valid for three years, with an external audit conducted. To remain certified, a company must conduct an annual internal audit and submit to WORKSAFELY®.

Burtnick describes audits as "a great way to measure your safety program."

Shwaluk says companies have access to their regional advisors for any questions or concerns. "We work with the company as a team and help them succeed, while giving them the tools they need."



Chrissy Hildebrand, safety and health representative, Horizons Earthworks



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Before you dig,
CALL CBYD
FOR A SAFE START



The days are getting shorter and temperatures are falling. Homeowners may be looking to squeeze in or wrap up that summer yard project.

If that involves digging, resist the temptation to 'get 'er done' at the expense of good planning.

Anyone planning to dig for a project – be it a fence post or a trench – must first take the first step to a safe excavation: click before you dig.

Click Before You Dig MB (CBYD.MB) is a free service by the Manitoba Common Ground alliance (MCGA) and its members. This service provides underground screening for utilities, such as cables, pipes or gas lines, and notifies the utility owners. The owners are required to mark out their utilities before the excavation starts.

The MCGA is dedicated to ensuring public safety, environmental protection, and the integrity of utility services by developing and promoting effective damage-prevention practices.

Other effective damage-prevention practices are shared through the Canadian Common Ground Alliance Best Practices, of which the MCGA is a member.

Rob Morrison, co-chair of the MCGA, says the due diligence to prevent underground damages is critical and that there are many possibilities of what could be found during a locate.

"Manitoba is in the middle of a few major projects enhancing its fiber optic distribution throughout the province.

Though a homeowner or contractor may think they know where the underground utilities are, things are changing and rather quickly," says Morrison "Gone are the days where we can just pick up a shovel and dig."

It's not worth the risk.

From buried lines to old services, there's more in the ground than we think.

Morrison states that there a number of reasons why you should plan ahead.

Locating and marking utility lines prevents what can be serious and expensive damage to buried utilities, but it also prevents potential harm to people and damage to personal property.

Striking a utility can be dangerous, but it will also delay your project for what might be an extended period.

"By planning ahead and requesting a locate, you receive critical information of what may be below. You are also provided directions by the utility owner on how to dig safely, minimizing risk and helping to ensure your project's success."

Although many people assume cables and utility lines are buried deep underground, sometimes they are not. Even nicking a line can cause serious issues.

Engaging Click Before You Dig Manitoba is completely free, as well as the locate itself.

Visit Click Before You Dig Manitoba at clickbeforeyoudigmb.com, to get started on a safe yard project.



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- Funding Opportunities Hub
- Student Chapter Mentorship
- Networking Reception
- Headshot Booth - Scholarship Fundraiser
- Grand Prize Draw - \$2000 Travel Vouchers

WHO WILL BE THERE

- Businesses & Industry Groups
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- Corporate Leaders & Investors
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