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Budget 2008 ushers in busy construction season



"Our government has modernized schools, social housing, hospitals, roads, bridges, public transit, community facilities and water systems."

**Finance Minister Dwight Duncan
Budget Speech**

On March 25, 2008, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan **introduced** the McGuinty government's fifth **budget**. It is a document that will usher in a busy construction season in many parts of the province, with infrastructure investments in everything from colleges and universities to hospitals and roads, bridges and much more.

The first budget of the McGuinty government's second term builds on the ambitious infrastructure agenda begun during the first mandate. Recognizing the clear link that exists between infrastructure investment and the ability to deliver sustainable, quality public services, the Budget contains \$1 billion in new funding for municipal infrastructure:

- \$400 million for roads and bridges;
- \$497 million for transit in the GTA and Hamilton, and
- \$100 million to rehabilitate social housing.

That investment builds on the government's Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative which directed \$450 million in funding for water, sewer and other critical local infrastructure projects to 243 communities around the province. The list of communities receiving that funding was announced March 28th, 2008.

"Ontario communities have infrastructure needs that are as unique as the communities themselves, and they are all important," said Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal David Caplan. "Our investment in these critical local

infrastructure projects is going to allow communities across Ontario to continue to deliver the services their residents need and deserve.”

There is a projected overall investment of \$7.5 billion in infrastructure in 2008-09, a clear reflection of the McGuinty government’s understanding that these investments help create jobs and drive the economy. Nearly \$1 billion is earmarked for building and renewing places where college and university students learn (including \$464 million provided in the 2007 Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review for postsecondary campus renewal and strategic capital projects).

The Budget also continued the McGuinty government’s commitment to reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality through transit and transportation funding, as well as a focus on building healthy rural and northern communities and protecting the environment.

The Ontario government’s 2008-2009 Budget also announced that once the \$30 billion ReNew Ontario plan is completed, the government will implement a new \$60 billion infrastructure plan over 10 years.

“The key to infrastructure planning is figuring out ways to meet the needs of today and plan for the needs of tomorrow,” said Minister Caplan. “This long-term plan is unique in the province’s history and is going to lay a solid infrastructure foundation in Ontario for generations to come.”

Ontario Budget 2008: Infrastructure Highlights

Infrastructure Expenditures

2007-08: \$8.9B

2008-09: \$7.5B

Municipal Infrastructure

- \$1B in new municipal funding in 2007-08:
 - \$400M for roads and bridges
 - \$497M for transit in the GTA/Hamilton
 - \$100M to rehabilitate social housing
- \$450M for the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative in 2007-08.

Transportation

- \$744M multi-year investment for Metrolinx Quick Win projects (including \$404M from \$1B municipal investment and \$100M from the 2007 FES).

- \$382M in 2008-09 for GO Transit rehabilitation projects.
- \$166M over five years to expand GO's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system.
- \$93M to increase contribution to 234 previously-ordered TTC subway cars (in \$1B municipal investment).
- \$448M over five years in new funding to rehabilitate more than 100 provincial bridges.
- Total provincial highway construction investment in 2008-09 includes \$927M in southern Ontario and \$557M in northern Ontario.
- \$16M for 35 Connecting Link projects.

Rural and Northern

- \$30M over four years to enhance broadband access in rural areas in southern Ontario (including \$4.5M in operating funds).
- Investment in the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation will rise to \$100 million annually over the next four years.

Skills

- \$45M over the next three years for the Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund to buy equipment to train apprentices in colleges.

Research

- \$250M over the next five years to the Ontario Research Fund for investments in research infrastructure.
- \$7.5M in 2007-08 to the University of Western Ontario for interdisciplinary research into chemicals and fuels made from agricultural resources.
- \$12.5M in 2007-08 for the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre.

Social

- The Province intends to expand the OSIFA Loan program to provide up to \$500M in loans to key social housing providers and also make Local Service Boards and not-for-profit professional arts training organizations eligible.
- \$30M in capital investments to support children and vulnerable

populations.

- \$14.1M for 10 residential hospices.
- \$9M for a new and bigger Toronto's Ronald McDonald House.

Building Places to Learn

- \$970 million to build places where students learn, including:
 - \$200M in 2007-08 for university renewal
 - \$200M over the next three years for the Strategic Skills Training Capital Investments Program to expand skills training centres and capacity
 - \$264M for 21 strategic capital projects in universities and \$200M for campus renewal (announced earlier in 2008) \$60M over three years for the College Equipment and Renewal Fund
 - \$25M in 2007-08 to establish the new Munk School of International Studies at the University of Toronto
 - \$10M in 2007-08 to the University of Waterloo at Stratford for a new digital media institute and convergence centre
 - \$9M in 2007-08 to the Ontario College of Art and Design for a research and innovation laboratory in interactive and digital media.

Environment

- \$56M over two years to eliminate PCB contaminated soil stored in London and an additional \$7 M in 2008-09 to clean up other sites.
- \$23M in 2007-08 to Conservation Authorities to support the development of source protection plans for municipal drinking water systems.
- \$10M in 2008-09 to modernize the Ministry of the Environment's lab and monitoring equipment.

Culture

- \$2.5M to the Canadian Film Centre for critical capital repairs and an improved training facility.



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