

# Preparing Ontario for a changing future

Thanks to climate change, technological innovation, and global economic forces, life in Ontario is changing fast. Our choice comes down to whether we are proactive or reactive in responding to these forces and whether we choose to make the most of new opportunities. Ontario can gain an advantage by investing in abundant and low-cost renewable energy, productive, healthy and active communities, and innovative businesses — all supported by a healthy and diverse natural world.

This is also an opportunity to deliver better outcomes for racialized and vulnerable communities, by building housing that increases affordability, controlling food costs by supporting local farmers and protecting farmlands, and by reducing toxics and pollutants everywhere, but especially in already overburdened communities.

It is also an opportunity to learn from Indigenous communities about how to implement more sustainable approaches to managing our interactions with the natural world and reshaping resource development to ensure we stop overrunning natural limits. This will also be an important approach to advance reconciliation.



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# Our vision for a better Ontario

**Affordability:** Ontario is a place where everyone can find a home, get access to healthy local food, and is prepared for a changing climate.

- Build communities by building homes within existing towns and cities that are safe, energy efficient and affordable
- Create a highly efficient, lowest cost renewable-based electricity system
- Take strong climate action to avoid costly disasters like fires and flooding
- Enact strong protections for local food sources and farmlands and an end to resource-wasting sprawl

**Liveability:** Ontarians have access to vibrant and well-connected communities embedded in healthy and diverse natural environments.

- Create walkable compact communities that are well connected by frequent and reliable public transit and active transportation networks
- Eliminate toxins and micro plastics that harm the environment and human health
- Protect natural systems that sustain people, wildlife and improve climate resilience
- End the inequitable impact of failing and inadequate infrastructure on under-resourced communities to reduce climate threats and improve health and well being

**Prosperity:** Ontario is at the forefront of building a fair and just economy.

- Build an economy that makes the most of existing resources through reuse, repair and recycling to create jobs and new businesses by embracing circular principles.
- Ensure that everyone has a chance to thrive in the new economy and that energy transition efforts truly reduce our climate and environmental impacts
- Start appropriately valuing large intact ecosystems in economic and resource planning and recognize the irreplaceable services they provide, including climate mitigation, flooding protection, reduced wildfire risk, sustenance and biodiversity conservation
- Make reducing climate-damaging emissions an economic priority to create new jobs, businesses and services and to lower costs for everyone while ensuring that the costs are equitably borne



# How do we get there?

## Affordability

### Lower home costs

- Adopt a model national building code and step code that allows municipalities to move faster on energy efficiency and ban gas in new construction to allow shift to lower cost and more efficient energy systems.
- Ensure equitable access to home energy retrofits across all housing types and income levels to ensure climate impacts do not fall primarily on those least able to deal with them.
- Restore the independence of the OEB and modify its mandate to include climate with the goal of an affordable energy transition.
- Institute energy labeling of homes and multi-residential buildings.
- Commit to a heat pump program as part of an affordability plan.
- Institute pay-for-surplus from household & business rooftop solar.

### Make EV adoption easier

- Establish a provincial Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) standard that matches those in BC and Quebec (especially if the federal standard is not maintained).
- Create a provincial ZEV rebate with a focus on the used vehicle market (where most low-middle income people buy cars).
- Catch up to BC and Quebec on public charging infrastructure, including requiring charging infrastructure in new multi-unit buildings and ready-to-hook up wiring in all new houses, and establish incentives for in-home charger installation through the IESO.

### Enhance local food production

- Increase existing protections and expand the Greenbelt
- Amend the Planning Act and associated provincial plans and policies to restore and enhance protections for natural heritage and water resource system features and areas and prime agricultural lands.
- Modernize the Nutrient Management Act to include synthetic fertilizer regulations and require regular soil testing.
- Mandate a return of independent crop advisors as requested by farm organizations. (Less use of pesticides and fertilizers that are GHG rich.).



# Liveability

## Plan better communities

- Direct provincial legalization of 4-storey 4-plex on all residential lots & 6-storey with ground floor commercial, both on mixed-use arterial roads and inside residential areas (Toronto model).
- Designate avenues and major residential streets inside presently “low-rise” areas as strategic locations for growth and intensification through Provincial planning policy.
- Require municipalities to impose significantly higher development charges for greenfield development than for units of equivalent size in multi-family buildings.
- Cancel 413 & Bradford Bypass and invest significantly in improved regional transit and active transportation corridors.
- Ensure climate action and community improvement policies do not unfairly impact under-resourced communities by adopting strong law and policy to avoid “renovictions” and “demovictions.”
- Restore the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in more muscular form, including fixed settlement boundaries.
- Amend the Planning Act to limit the use of Ministerial Zoning Orders under specific circumstances consistent with the protection of the environment, cultural heritage, Indigenous rights and farmland.
- Restore third-party appeals of zoning and official plan amendments while removing private landowner appeals of upzoning of existing built-up areas.
- Restore power of Conservation Authorities to say “no” to development based on harm to environmental values of land.
- Establish mode shift and vehicle kilometer traveled (VKT) reduction targets in climate plan (as BC has done).
- Reform gas tax funds for transit program into a larger, dedicated program to support transit operations; funding service frequency and affordable fares.

## Protect natural systems that protect us

- Properly recognize the value of intact natural areas, particularly forests, wetlands, and peatlands, for climate control and create mechanisms to enhance protection and restoration.
- Adopt a provide-wide net gain wetland policy to increase protections for wetlands and reverse Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES) changes; update and implement Ontario’s 2017 Wetland Strategy.



# Prosperity

## Centre resource planning on sustainability

- Adopt [Green Transition Principles](#) for new mining projects.
- Put sustainability front and centre in resource planning to improve and sustain economic opportunities for northern communities and First Nations and create new circular economy opportunities (e.g., reprocessing of mining waste).
- Establish Indigenous-led co-governance processes for natural resources and energy projects and land-use planning.
- Participate fully in the Regional Assessment for the Ring of Fire area and broader northern Ontario region and restore funding or provide new funding if required for Indigenous-led planning efforts.

## Build a circular economy

- Enforce high targets for businesses on waste reduction, recycling and reuse via Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations and ensure all waste generated in the province is covered (household and ICI).
- Ban organic waste from landfills and incinerators and support infrastructure for environmentally-sound organics treatment.
- Refuse expansion of waste incineration requests; plan the phase-out of existing incineration facilities.
- Expand Deposit Return to non-alcoholic beverage containers.

## Reap benefits from climate action

- Transition the Emissions Performance Standards (EPS) into a Cap and Trade system and spend the large revenue generated on supporting climate solutions.
- Create industrial efficiency programs.
- End generating station contracts that do not align with net-zero electricity goal and conduct an Auditors General audit of nuclear plans and IESO.
- Require reporting of, and action to deliver on, Credible Climate Transition Plans from all large companies regulated in Ontario.
- Ensure community and individual monetary benefit from proximity to wind farms and large solar installations.
- Cancel the gas hookup subsidy for Enbridge.
- Stop wasting billions of dollars, delaying real climate action, increasing community hazard and creating new nuclear waste with new nuclear proposals and expansions.
- Implement payment for ecosystem services using cap and trade revenue, fines, etc.
- Monitor and communicate costs and impacts of climate change to the public.
- Establish a Climate Foundation to fund civil society action on climate change.
- Clarify that the mandate of financial regulators (like the Ontario Securities Commission) should consider climate factors.

## Prepare workers for the new economy

- Develop retraining, job placement, and financial support programs tailored to the specific needs of workers in industries undergoing transformation.
- Align with the objectives of the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act and ensure coherence between federal and provincial efforts.

## Recognize the value of natural areas and biodiversity

- Commit to the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and update and appropriately resource implementation of the Ontario Biodiversity Strategy to align with the 2030 Nature Strategy (federal), specifically:
  - Protecting 30% of Ontario's land and waters by 2030;
  - Restoring 30% of all degraded ecosystems.
- Restore and enhance the integrity of the Endangered Species Act — including cancellation of the pay-to-slay fund, restoration of science-based decision making at COSSARO, and Ministerial oversight of assessments — and mandate limitations on exemptions.
- Amend provincial legislation to recognize and permanently protect Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and appropriately support other Indigenous-led conservation efforts.
- Protect the Hudson Bay Lowlands, a powerful natural solution to climate change, with globally significant carbon stores that if disrupted and drained would undermine progress made nationally to reduce emissions.
- Restore the independence and capacity of the Greenbelt Council and Niagara Escarpment Commission to enable decision-making consistent with the goals and objectives of those provincial plans.

