

ROMA Delegation Request 2024
Infrastructure Funding to Support High Density Infilling
Ministry of Infrastructure

Summary of the Issue

The County of Essex and Windsor stand on the brink of monumental economic development, fueled by transformative projects poised to create tens of thousands of jobs and substantial spinoff benefits. However, significant infrastructure enhancements are urgently needed to unlock this economic potential.

The accelerated construction of a \$5-billion EV battery plant, a new regional hospital and a new international border crossing demand immediate infrastructure upgrades. Without considerable provincial support, the region will be unable to fully capitalize on the economic potential of these generational investments – projects that will bolster Ontario’s economy and cement its status as a manufacturing powerhouse.

These infrastructure upgrades are essential in minimizing the negative impact this tremendous growth will have on Essex County’s growing agricultural sector, ensuring the region’s farmers have safe, unfettered access to their fields and to market. Our region is unique with its mix of rural and urban industry. We have a duty to manage the needs of both so that they complement rather than conflict with each other, maximizing the potential of each for the economic good of the region and the province.

Background

The Windsor-Essex region is on the cusp of historic economic growth, driven by transformative projects that promise to generate tens of thousands of jobs, inject hundreds of millions of dollars into government coffers, and ignite an unprecedented surge in residential, commercial, and industrial growth. However, the full economic potential of these historic projects may not be realized without substantial provincial support for necessary infrastructure enhancements.

The construction of a \$5-billion EV battery plant, a new regional hospital and a new international border crossing have the potential to transform the regional and provincial economy, but significant infrastructure upgrades are urgently required to minimize traffic congestion and conflict with Essex County’s agricultural centre and to ensure these projects promote rather than prevent continued residential, commercial and industrial growth.

The battery plant alone is projected to create 2,500 direct jobs, with estimates ranging from 14,000 to 21,000 indirect jobs, along with supply chain investments surpassing \$1 billion. Simultaneously, the construction of the new regional hospital, set to commence in 2026, is expected to generate over 11,000 jobs, contributing \$1.57 billion to the region's GDP, and attracting top talent in healthcare. However, the existing infrastructure, mainly rural roads and

congested arteries like E.C. Row Expressway, is ill prepared to handle that explosive growth. Excessive traffic disruptions impeding additional growth and increased conflicts with the agricultural sector are anticipated during construction without infrastructure upgrades.

An historic infrastructure injection is urgently required to ensure the region and province can reap the full benefits of these transformative economic opportunities. Priority enhancements, such as road expansions and enhanced arterial routes, are essential to accommodate increased traffic and spur residential, commercial and industrial growth. The City of Windsor and County of Essex have already committed substantial funds, but require an additional \$300 million for immediate capital investments to address pressing infrastructure deficiencies.

The Ontario government has consistently shown its support for Windsor-Essex and its belief that this region can leverage its skilled workforce, history of manufacturing excellence and its proximity to the border to become a powerhouse that drives the provincial economy. The County of Essex is seeking continued support to maximize the positive impact of the generational opportunities before it. Provincial funding for infrastructure upgrades will minimize congestion and conflict with the agricultural sector, providing our farmers safe access to fields and to market, and it will ensure continued residential, commercial and industrial growth for the good of the region and province.