



February 7, 2023

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy  
Minister of Finance  
c/o Budget Secretariat  
Frost Building North, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
95 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1Z1

**Re: Provincial Budget Recommendations**

Dear Honourable Bethlenfalvy,

The Whitby Chamber of Commerce, is the largest Chamber in the Region and represents over 650 businesses in Whitby and the Durham Region. Based on the values and interests of our membership, our Chamber's Advocacy Committee, respectfully submits the attached recommendation to the Provincial Government in advance of the 2023 Budget.

Our Chamber community is focused on supporting Ontario businesses by strengthening our infrastructures and harnessing amazing economic opportunities right here in Durham Region. If given the opportunity and provincial resources, we know Whitby and Durham can be a powerhouse of innovation and development for Ontario, Canada, and the World.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these submissions and for taking the time to consider them for the 2023 Provincial Budget. If there is anything the Chamber can do to support and inform the budget work, please feel welcome to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Scuse", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Andrew Scuse

President, Whitby Chamber of Commerce

Attached: Provincial 2023 Pre-Budget Consultations



CC: Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark  
Honourable Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney  
Honourable Minister of Health, Sylvia Jones  
Member of Provincial Parliament, Lorne Coe  
Regional Chair, John Henry  
Mayor, Elizabeth Roy

**Written Submission for Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2023 Provincial Budget**

**Submitted By: Whitby Chamber of Commerce**

**Date: February 10, 2023**

## Summary

The Whitby Chamber of Commerce thanks the government for the opportunity to provide input into the 2023 Provincial budget.

First, we would like to acknowledge and appreciate the Ontario government removing tolls off highway 412 and 418; this policy supports Whitby and Durham Region's expanding communities travel with more ease and efficiency. The removal of tolls has also helped ease traffic off other arteries, making travelling in Durham that much more effective.

In addition, we submit recommendations on behalf of the over 650 members of the Whitby Chamber of Commerce (the biggest Chamber in the Region) that will support businesses as we stabilize the economy in a post-pandemic landscape. The Whitby Chamber of Commerce recommends that the Government of Ontario:

- **Advance the implementation for Lakeridge Health's Master Plan** to build Durham Region's new hospital and trauma centre;
- Advocate to the Federal government to **release the airport lands** in Pickering to realize the economic development potential of the lands;
- **Accelerate the expansion of local transportation infrastructure** including the GO East extension to Bowmanville;
- Invest in housing policies that directly and substantively **support Ontarians' access to affordable and equitable housing. This includes engaging all sectors on the impacts of Bill 23 and subsidizing municipalities and regions for anticipated losses that we fear the business community will have to make up in tax increases; and**
- Leverage the pre-budget recommendations submitted by the **Ontario Chamber of Commerce**, representing the business community across the Province.

## Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1: Hospital**

The Government of Ontario has approved a Whitby location for a new Hospital and Trauma Centre to service Durham Region; thank you for choosing Durham, and investing into the largest growing Region in Ontario. We recommend the Government of Ontario **advance the implementation for Lakeridge Health's Master Plan** to build Durham Region's new hospital and trauma centre.

Statistics clearly show that healthcare demands in the Durham Region are expected to rise due to substantial population increase in the coming years. Durham Region currently does not have a trauma centre and is currently massively under-resourced for health care per capita. We recommend capital funding decisions prioritize this essential service in the next budget. Specifically; we ask the Planning Grant be awarded to Lakeridge Health in order to advance the project.

- **Recommendation 2: Transportation**

We recommend that the Government of Ontario focuses on long-term economic recovery, and:

- Advocate to the Federal government to **release and build an airport on the airport lands** in Pickering to realize the economic development potential of the lands;
- **Accelerate the expansion of local transportation infrastructure** including the GO East extension to Bowmanville; and
- Harness Ontario’s marine business opportunities by advocating to the federal government for the containerization of the Oshawa port; supporting local businesses, assess and harness port opportunities; and support the attraction of international businesses to the Oshawa port area through Invest Ontario.

We recommend that the Government of Ontario focus on long-term economic recovery and advocate the Federal government to **release the airport lands in Pickering and develop a new airport**. This will not only benefit the Region of Durham, but businesses and residents located right across the GTA.

The Federal Airport Lands in Pickering are a real opportunity to simultaneously strengthen Canada’s global competitiveness, capitalize on Ontario’s investment in Highways 407, 412 and 418 and unleash Durham’s economic potential. Given the potential residential growth coming to this region, the result could be thousands of new jobs and business opportunities. Durham Region Report on GTA East Airport: <https://www.durham.ca/en/discovering-durham/resources/Documents/GTA-East-Airport-FINAL-02-05-2018.pdf>

To harness the marine opportunities offered by the great lakes, we further recommend that the Government of Ontario:

1. attract international businesses to the Oshawa port through Invest Ontario
2. campaign to the federal government to containerize Oshawa port, and
3. support local and international businesses, access and harness port opportunities for shortsea services that convert more cargo – including containerized cargo – to the marine mode.

With the establishment of the Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority in May 2021, there are tremendous opportunities to connect Durham Region to trade and recreation through the great lakes waterways. Investment in the development of the Oshawa port is integral to harnessing the economic opportunities.

- **Recommendation 3: Housing**

We recommend that the Government of Ontario invest in housing policies that directly and substantively **support Ontarians' access to affordable and equitable housing. This includes engaging all sectors on the impacts of Bill 23 and subsidizing municipalities and regions for anticipated losses that we fear the business community will have to make up in tax increases.**

We recommend that more consultation take place to improve and strengthen the policies under the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 to ensure the Act's objectives are addressed, including improving housing affordability in the province. Specifically, we ask that the Ontario Government ensure that savings from the removal of developmental charges are passed onto home buyers, and are not more profits for developers.

In order to help homeowners save money and support municipalities deal with the financial shortfall from the removal of substantial developmental charges, we recommend that the Ontario government reduce or transfer to municipalities their portion of property taxes collected.

- **Recommendation 4: Communication and Transparency**

We recommend that the Government of Ontario leverage the pre-budget recommendations submitted by the **Ontario Chamber of Commerce**, representing the business community across the Province. The [OCC's Blueprint to Bolster Ontario's Property](#) is a detailed and valuable resource with specific recommendations for all Government departments, and we suggest that the Ontario government budget for key recommendations of this Blueprint.