



*June 28, 2021 Op-Ed*

## ***Alberta's path to economic recovery is built on better roads***

As Alberta's economy emerges from a prolonged slumber due to the pandemic, the roads and bridges of our essential transportation network are shouldering the pent-up demands of a provincial economy that's coming back to life.

Not only are we awakening from the pandemic, but Alberta is faced with a new economic normal where pipeline and traditional oil and gas face unprecedented challenges. The imperative of diversifying our economy demands more products move to market by road, rail and air transportation.

We are witnessing the steady return to normal traffic patterns in communities across the province, and the inevitable wear and tear on city streets, municipal roads and rural highways.

The welcome return of life to normal reminds us how important our transportation network is for moving our economy forward. It also reminds us how critical it is for governments at all levels to implement budget policies that ensure our roads are built efficiently and maintained properly.

The Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association (ARHCA) recently commissioned a survey that showed 65 to 75% of Albertans (<http://drivingimprovement.ca/fix-our-roads/>) think governments should do a better job maintaining roads, and that investing in roadwork will help rebuild our economy.

Albertans are well aware of the current state of our road network. Last month, the ARHCA ran a social media contest seeking photos of the province's worst road. We posted submissions to [drivingimprovement.ca](http://drivingimprovement.ca), and the winner was a stretch of highway near Grande Cache that was failing from erosion. However, submissions from across the province showed municipal streets, gravel roads and highways in serious need of repair or replacement.

Together, the worst road campaign, and the survey, have drawn attention to an issue we think should be central in upcoming municipal election campaigns: there is a clear need for smarter infrastructure investment and asset management that facilitates job creation and resilient cities.

Our survey showed Albertans are demanding better. They expect infrastructure decisions based on a careful assessment of long-term need, safety concerns and strategic support of our economy. As our province recovers, municipalities will have a prominent role in ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently through the transparent and competitive tendering of projects.

It's also critical to our members, and the jobs they offer to the hardworking Albertans who use our roads, and those industries that plie them with the goods and services we depend on.

Governments at all levels need to do better and fix our roads. We will continue to advocate for improvement, and we encourage Albertans to demand our provincial and municipal leaders do the same.

Learn more about the Fix Our Roads campaign at [drivingimprovement.ca](http://drivingimprovement.ca).

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