

## 1. Canada-Ontario Partnership to Build (COPB)

**Goal:** Ensure infrastructure funding works for rural and small urban communities.

**Challenge:**

Rural municipalities lack the tax base to fund growth-enabling infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, transit, broadband).

**Impact:**

Infrastructure gaps are limiting housing development and worsening affordability.

**WOWC Ask:**

- Ensure eligibility for rural and upper-tier municipalities
- Support infrastructure needed to unlock housing supply

**2026 Focus:**

- Participate in discussions on fund design
- Confirm consultation timelines and engagement opportunities

**Infrastructure = Housing Enabler**

## 2. Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)

**Goal:** Align funding with rural service delivery realities.

**Challenge:**

Municipalities are acting as frontline responders to homelessness, mental health, and addictions—without sustainable funding.

**Impact:**

Growing pressure on municipal budgets and reduced capacity for core services.

**WOWC Ask:**

- Introduce a dedicated rural funding component
- Increase base funding for rural service managers

**2026 Focus:**

- Clarify provincial allocation model
- Explore targeted funding increases for rural communities

**Rural realities ≠ urban funding model**

## 3. Regional Rural Transit Authority

**Goal:** Enable coordinated, equitable transit across Southwestern Ontario.

**Challenge:**

No regional transit coordination model exists outside of major urban areas, and there is a significant funding disparity between urban and rural regions.

**Impact:**

Limited access to jobs, healthcare, and education; constrained workforce mobility.

**WOWC Ask:**

Establish a Regional Rural Transit Authority to:

- Plan and coordinate inter-community transit
- Deliver equitable operating and capital funding

**2026 Focus:**

- Confirm provincial openness to a regional model
- Explore governance similar to regional broadband collaboration models

**Per capita funding: \$191 (urban) vs \$13 (rural)**

## WHY THIS MATTERS



### Infrastructure & Housing

- Growth is increasing in rural and small urban communities
- Infrastructure funding has not kept pace
- Without investment, housing supply cannot expand



### Mental Health & Homelessness

- Municipal role continues to expand beyond mandate
- Current funding is not sustainable or predictable
- Rural service delivery costs are not reflected



### Workforce & Economy

- Western Ontario drives key sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, agri-food
- Transit essential for workforce participation
- Regional coordination is required to compete economically

## KEY DISCUSSION OBJECTIVES

WOWC is seeking to:



### COPB

- Ensure access for rural and upper-tier municipalities
- Identify formal participation opportunities



### HPP

- Clarify funding allocation methodology
- Explore rural funding enhancements



### Transit

- Confirm provincial openness to a regional model
- Explore scalable governance and funding approach



## KEY MESSAGES

- Western Ontario **powers Ontario's economic engine** and, as a major economic driver, requires infrastructure and funding tools that keep pace with its growth.
- Municipalities cannot sustain expanded homelessness response without **long-term provincial support**
- Regional **transit is essential** for workforce mobility, healthcare access, and economic competitiveness

## OUR APPROACH



Evidence-based policy input



Collaborative program design



Advancing shared provincial-municipal objectives

