



Sidewalks to Skyscrapers: An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy 2025-2035

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Agenda

1. Current state of Toronto's Economy

- Economic trends and Toronto's economic performance

2. A New Economic Plan for Toronto

- Rationale, process, Toronto's challenges and strengths, overview of the plan

3. Anticipated Outcomes

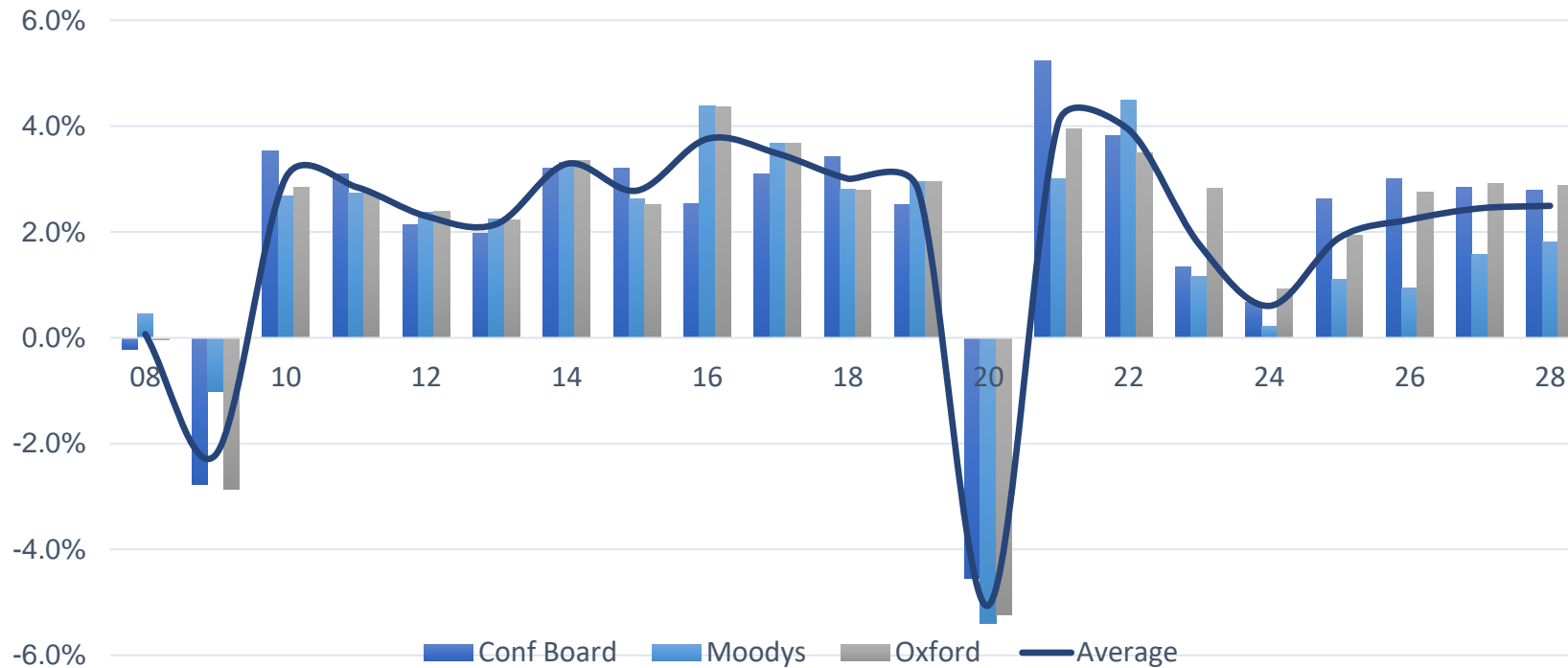
- Success indicators, Toronto Economic Dashboard, macroeconomic indicators



1. Current State of Toronto's Economy



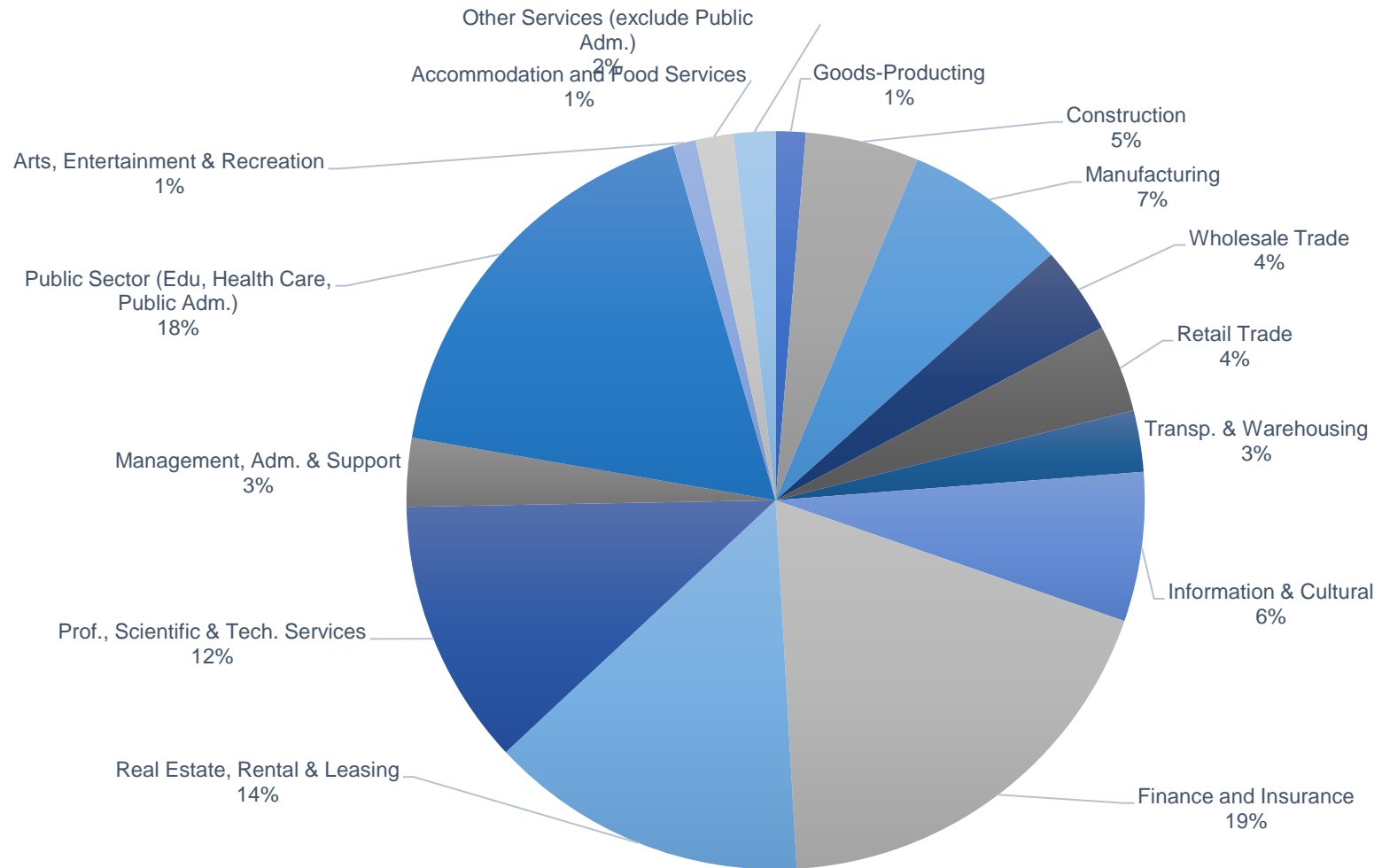
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



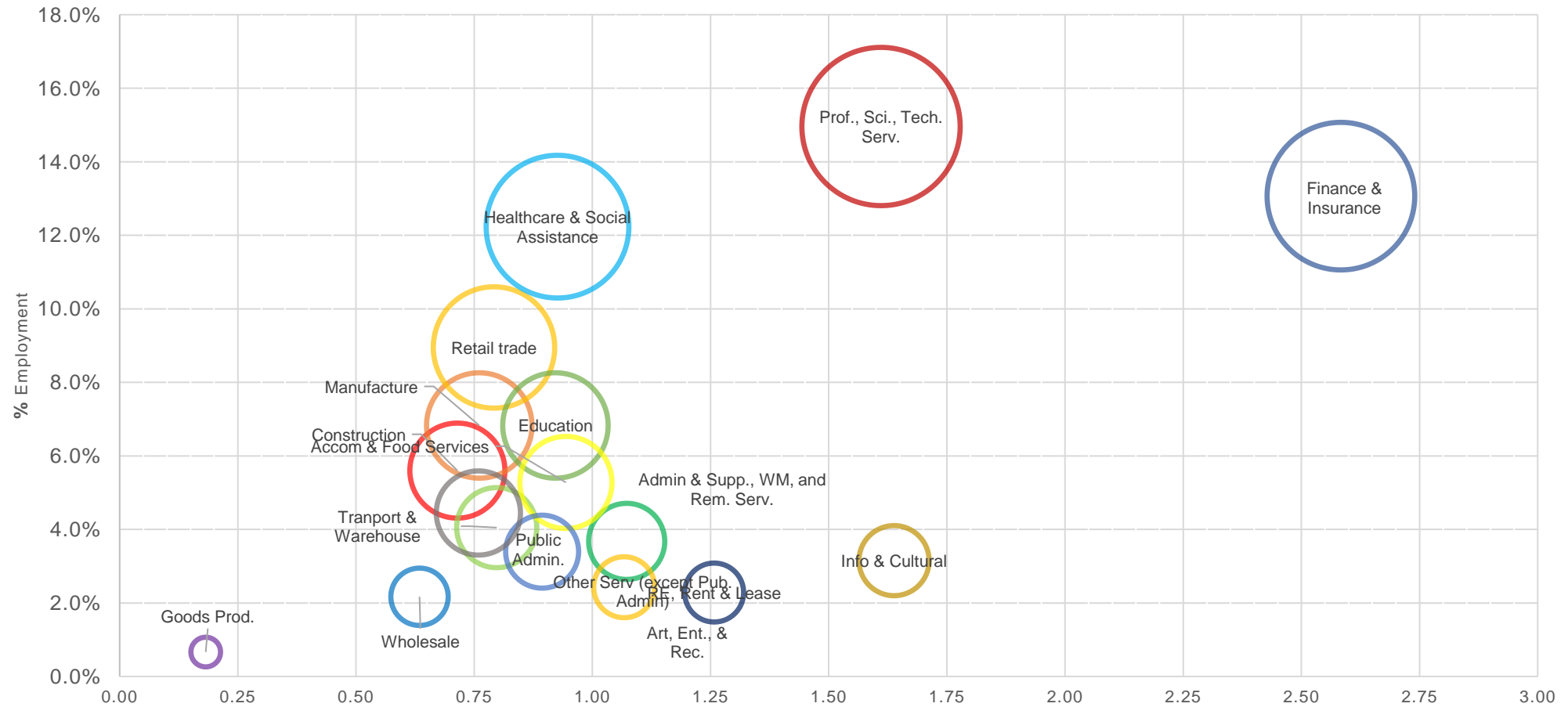
- Toronto has shown resilience through its ability to withstand economic shocks, such as the 2008 Great Recession and the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- With projections based for 2025-2028, the GDP is expected to grow by 2.9%

Sources: Conference Board of Canada (SEP 2024), Moody's Analytics (OCT 2024), Oxford Economics (SEP 2024)

Diversification

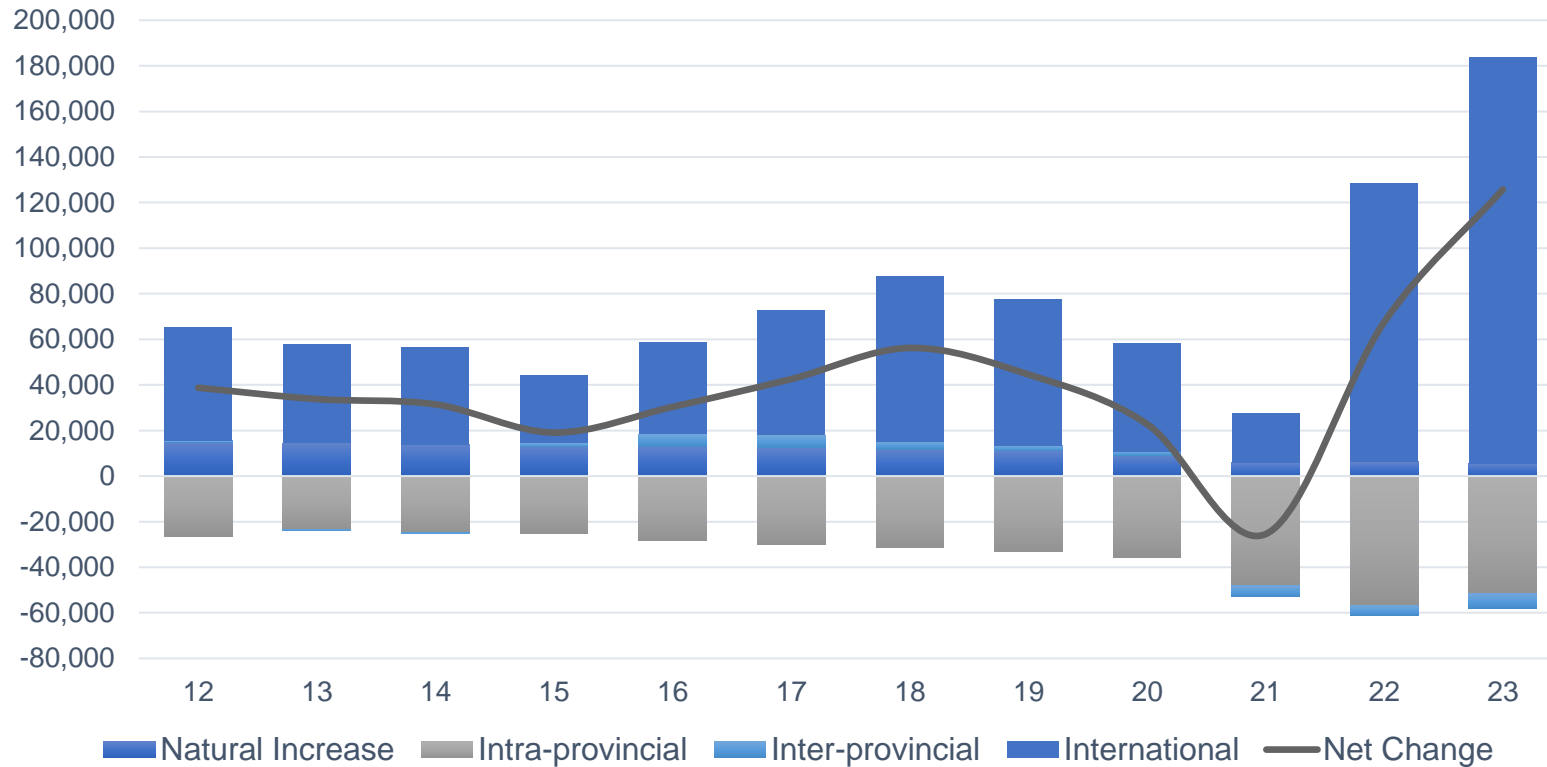


Specialization



Source: Statistics Canada
| Updated Values: 2023

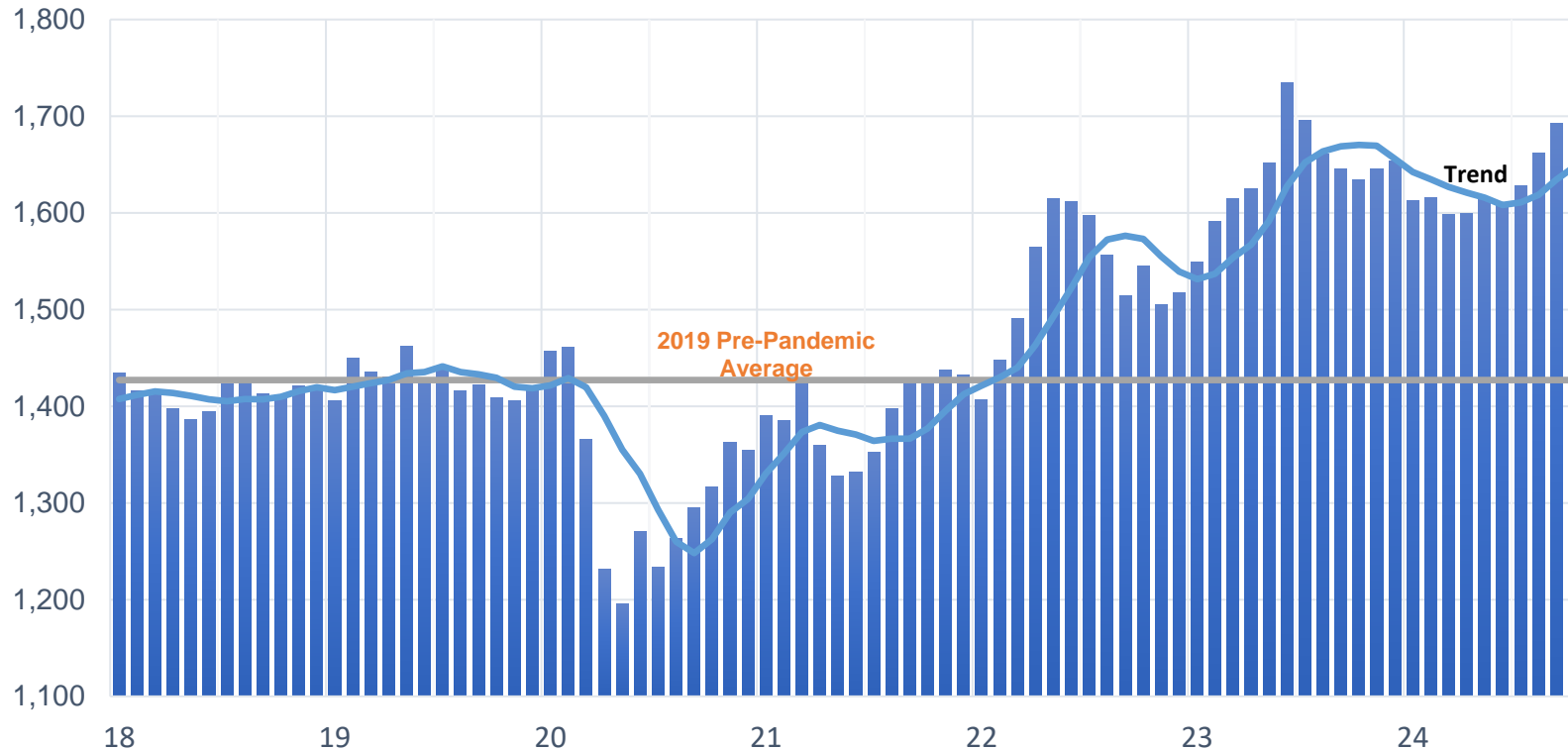
Population



Source: Statistics Canada, Population by Component Updated Values: 2023

- Toronto continues to attract talent from around the world.
- There were close to 180,000 international arrivals in Toronto in 2023
- Generally, Toronto has experienced a positive population growth driven by strong immigration.

Employment

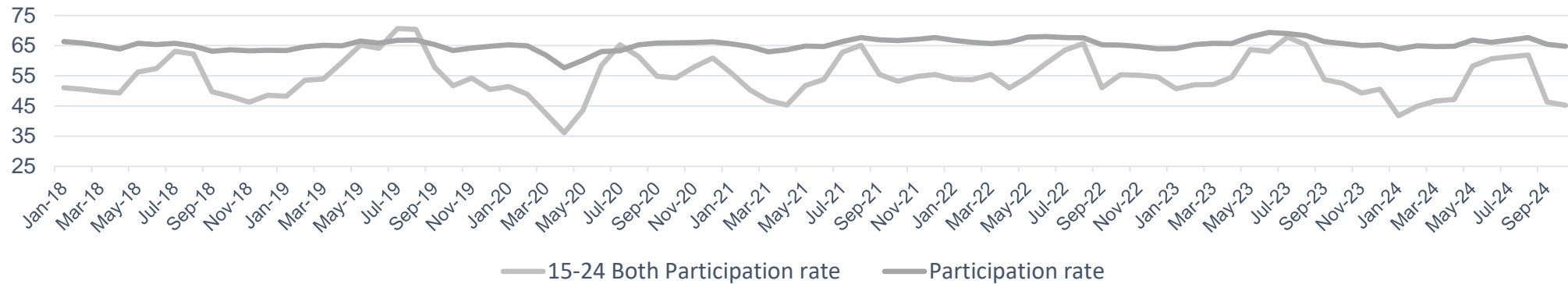


Source: Statistics Canada, City of Toronto EDC Estimates Updated Values: October 2024

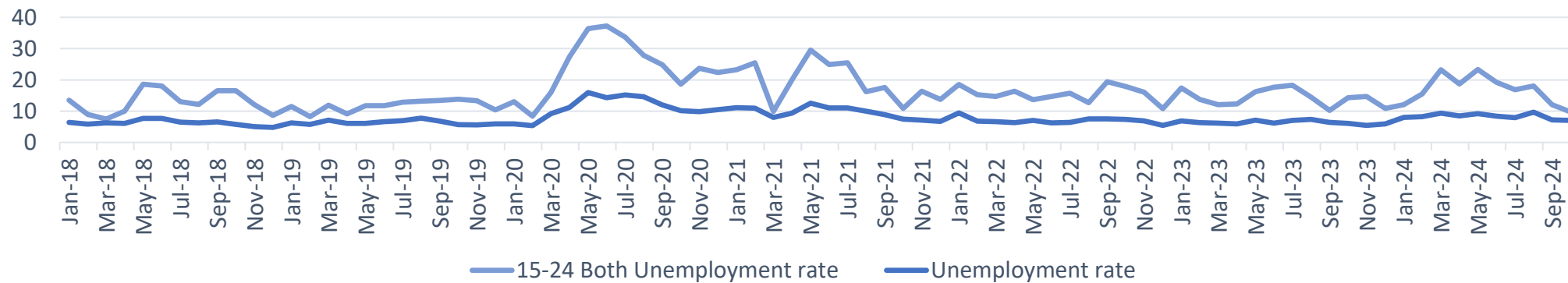
- Generally, Toronto has added over 246,000 jobs since 2018.
- Approximately 68,000 jobs have been added to Toronto's economy since the beginning of this year.
- There is an upward trend predicated for employment in Toronto post 2024.

Youth Employment

Participation Rate 15-24

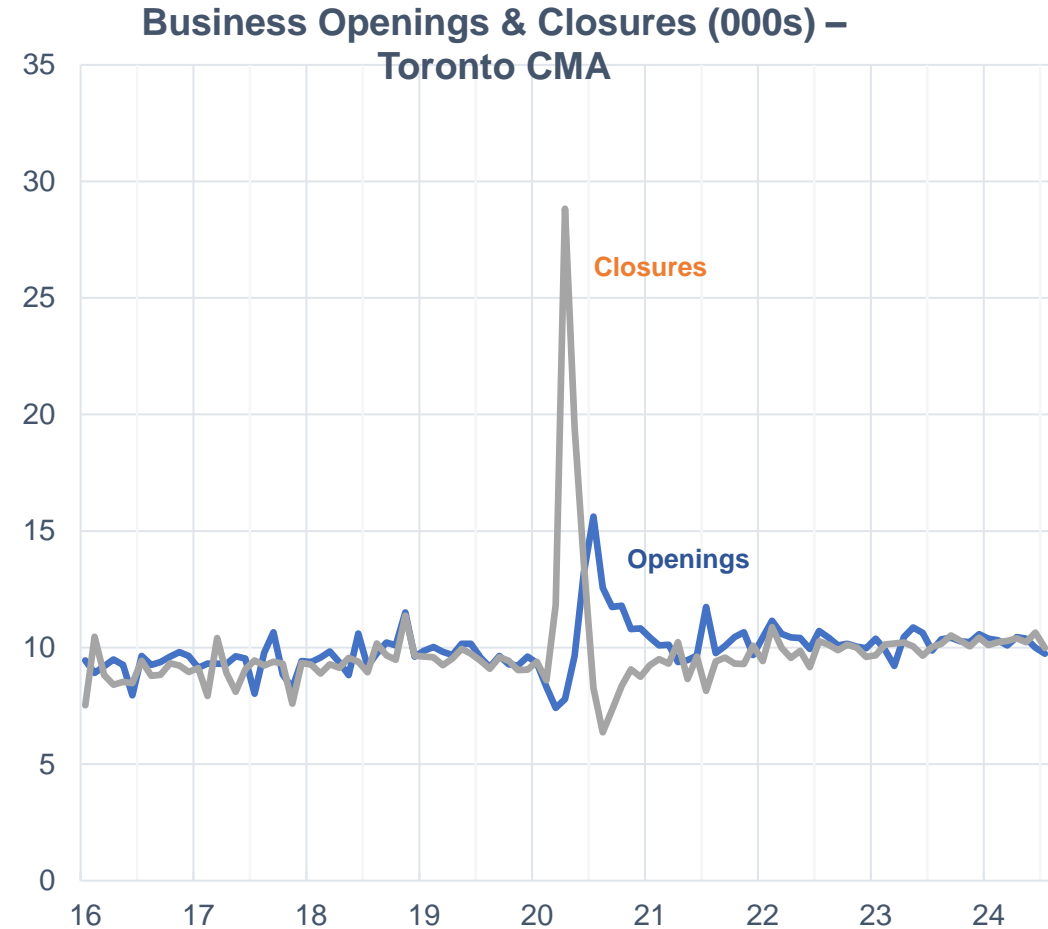
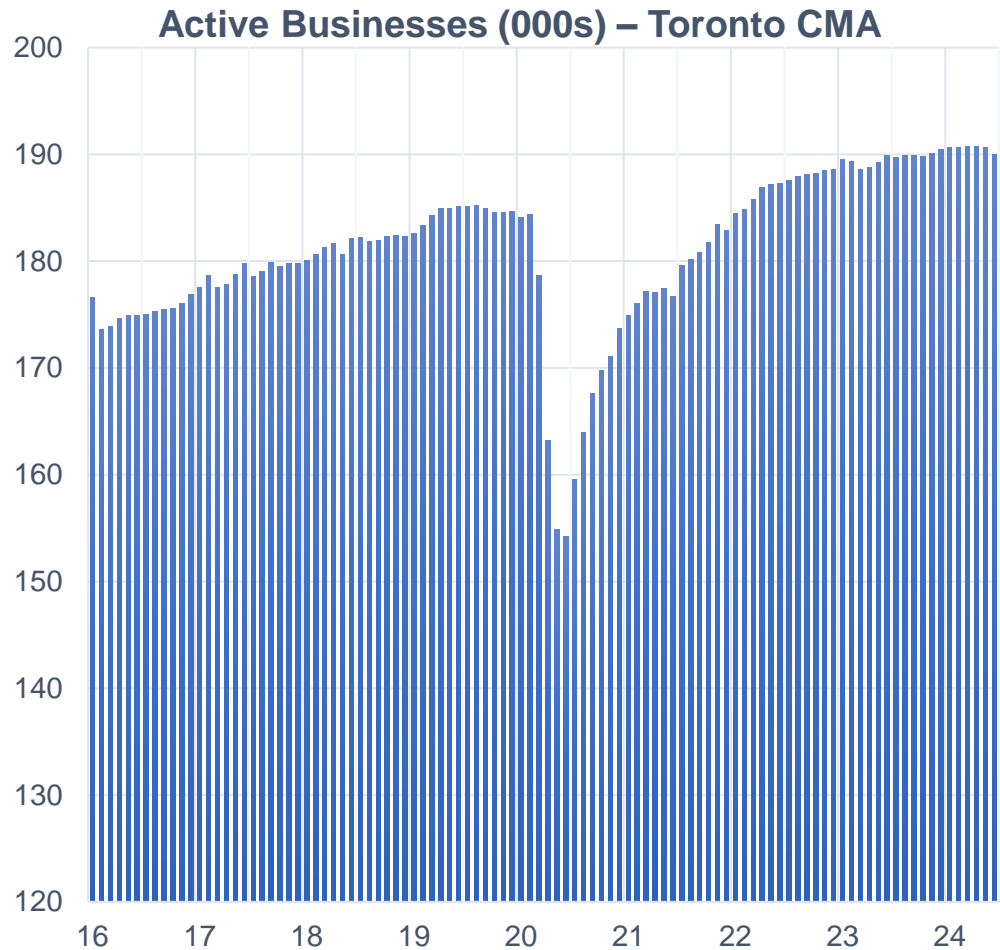


Unemployment Rate 15-24



Source: Statistics Canada, City of Toronto EDC Estimates Updated Values: October 2024

Businesses Active, Opened & Closures



2. A New Economic Plan for Toronto



Rationale – Why Now?

- Toronto is Canada's principal economic engine and its global centre for commerce, creativity and capital - representing 20% of Canada's GDP and 53% of Ontario's GDP.
- It has been over a decade since [Collaborating for Competitiveness](#), the City of Toronto's plan to advance economic development, with a focus on job creation and economic growth.
- Despite many underlying strengths, Toronto's economy faces both local and global challenges in maintaining its economic position, including liveability, affordability, technology adoption, labour market disruption and increased global competition for talent and investment.
- Action is required to strengthen Toronto's competitive advantages and mitigate challenges, to ensure this city's economy remains prosperous and resilient for generations to come.

Key Input

Data and Research

- Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) through CivicLabTO on inclusive economic development.
- In-house and Canadian Urban Institute research on relevant macroeconomic data, economic trends, and best practices in other cities.
- External research on relevant topics – e.g. Downtown Recovery (School of Cities), Return to Office (ICE Committee).

Stakeholders

1,000+ Stakeholders

- 473 – *Canadian Urban Institute*: sector-, and geographic-specific
- 222 – *Public Survey*: general public
- 5 – *Mokwateh*: Indigenous businesses and business associations
- 429 – *Ad hoc*: community engagement, advocacy groups and business
- 38 – *Council Advisory Bodies (4)*: representatives from communities
- 26 – *Economic Advisory Panel*: c-suite level input

Toronto - Challenges & Strengths

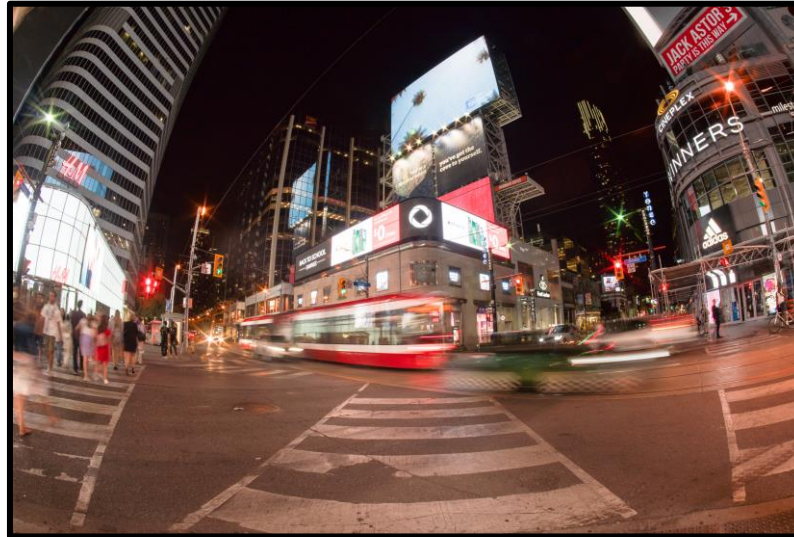
Challenges

Housing Affordability

Workforce / Labour Shortage,
Overall Productivity

Economic Polarization

Congestion and Climate Change



Strengths

Diversified Economy

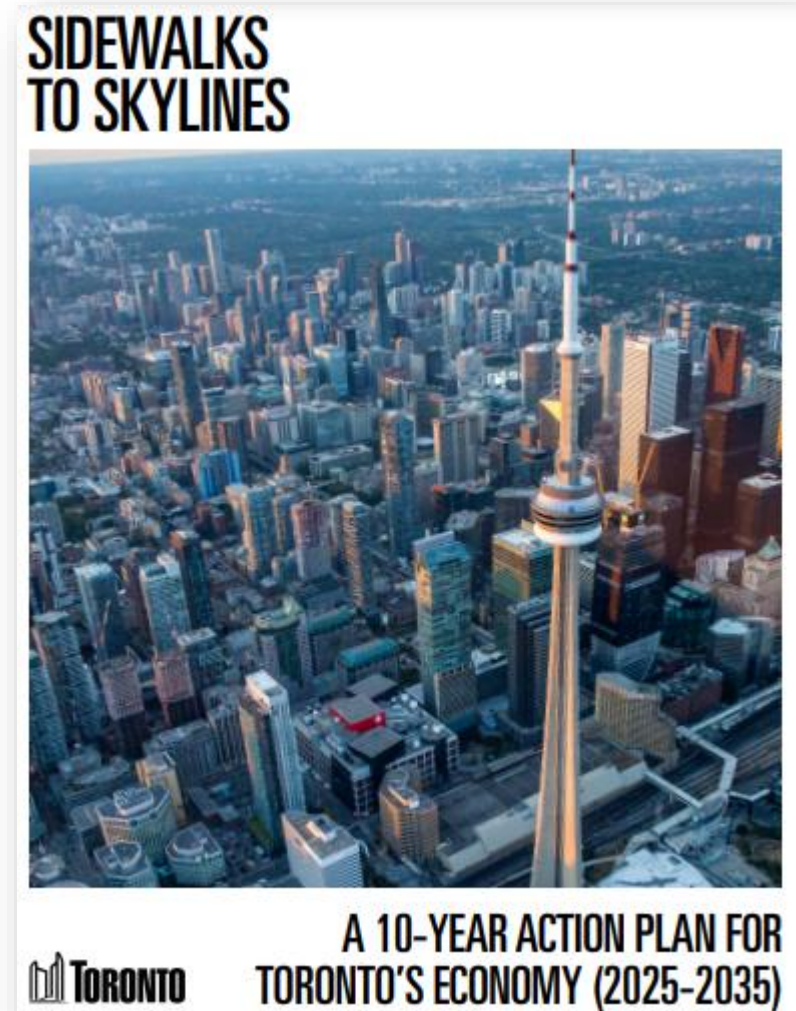
Immigration

Population Growth

High Quality of Life

Action Plan for Toronto's Economy

- The Action Plan for Toronto's Economy sets an ambitious ten-year vision for Toronto's economy, guided by prosperity, sustainability and inclusion.
- It includes one foundation, three priorities and actions.
 - A total of 29 leading actions are identified. In total, the plan identifies 73 actions to strengthen Toronto's economy.
- Progress will be reported on an annual basis, and will be responsive to a changing economy.



Overview



Example Leading Actions

Main Street Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a Main Street Resiliency Fund to offset impacts of infrastructure construction and establish a commercial replacement policy to protect independent businesses impacted by real estate development.
Employment Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect lands in designated Employment Areas so that they remain strategic places attracting new business investment and startups, and enter into partnerships with key organizations to advance their long-term productive use.
Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support people with disabilities by improving the information about construction projects; increasing enforcement of bylaw infractions that slow traffic; recovering and/or offsetting the costs of congestion [...]
Industry & Sector Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead and invest in specific strategies that provide resources, services and sector specific branding to drive growth in the manufacturing, life sciences, food and beverage, green, creative industries and tech sectors.
Small Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate to the provincial government to enhance protections for small businesses, such as commercial rent control, and review the Small Business Property Tax Sub-Class eligibility criteria from an equity perspective.
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With local partners and the private sector, including the Employment Services System Manager, develop greater employment and professional development opportunities for Toronto's youth with a focus on Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups

3. Anticipated Outcomes



Measuring Success

- The City will track the success of the Action Plan through success indicators assigned to each action and by monitoring macroeconomic indicators.
- Changes in the economy will be tracked, to:
 - (1) help inform tracking success of the Action Plan,
 - (2) inform updates to the Action Plan throughout yearly reporting.

ACTION 20

DRIVER:

Downtowns and central business districts are being transformed across North America and need concerted leadership to transform.

ACTION:

Unite interests in the future of Downtown

Create a downtown stewardship organization to coordinate, catalyze investment, and speak with a unified voice on the needs of Toronto's downtown.

SUCCESS INDICATORS:

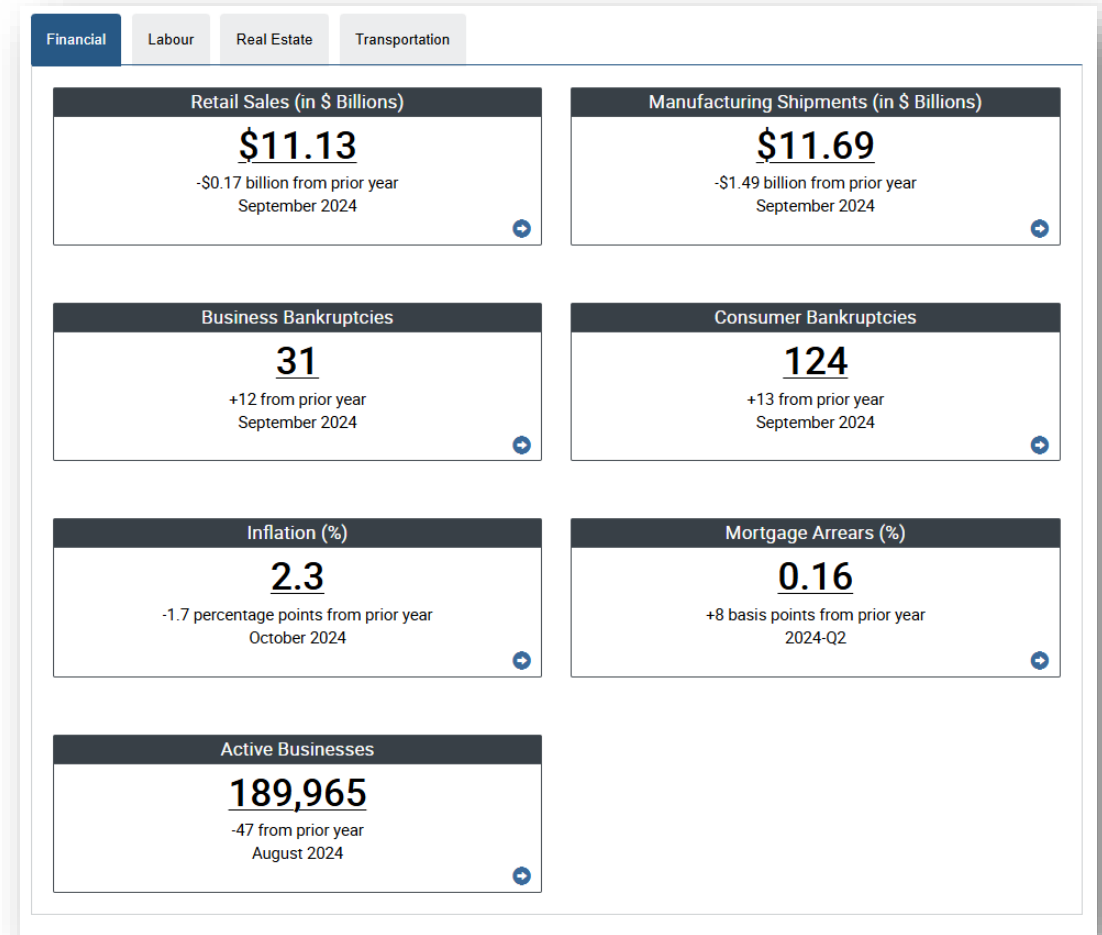
> Stewardship organization created by 2026.

Sample – Success Indicators

<p>Getting The Basics Right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue increasing annual commercial property tax rate at 50% of the residential rate in any given year, until the provincial ratio is met. • Achieve housing targets of the Housing Action Plan of 6,500 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, 41,000 affordable rental units and 17,500 rent-controlled units. • Indigenous procurement policy co-developed by 2028. • 100% of new buildings are designed and built to be near zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. 	<p>Global Competitiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto ranks Top 5 nationally (Canada) in 2030 and Top 10 in North America in each sector identified by 2035. • Launch an Office for the Tech and Innovation Sector (OTIS) in 2025. • Preservation through 2035 of the current amount of land in designated Employment Areas. • Three new financially-sustainable flagship events with international reach promoting key sectors by 2030.
<p>Quality Jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,000 more summer jobs for young people by 2026. • City of Toronto partners and enables a minimum of three commercial land trusts by 2028. • Boost the number of startups by women founders by 25% and double the amount of venture funding received by women-led startups by 2028. • Develop 10 new industry-academia partnerships by 2030, directly aligning educational outcomes with job market needs. 	<p>Strong Main Streets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial rent control established by 2030. • Ground-floor commercial replacement policy for main streets developed by 2027. • Small Business Solutions Office established by 2028. • Double public realm investments delivered by BIAs by 2030.

Toronto Economic Dashboard

- The [Toronto Economic Dashboard](#) offers a timely bird's eye view of Toronto's economy in both graphical and tabular format, including data on:
 - financial,
 - labour market,
 - real estate,
 - and transportation activity.



Sample - Additional Economic Indicators

Macroeconomic Indicators – to be added to the City's Economic Dashboard



Business Activity

Business sentiment, development activity, business attraction, retention and expansion, and job creation among others



Sector Indicators

Sector-specific performance of Toronto's key and emerging sectors through sector employment and contribution to GDP

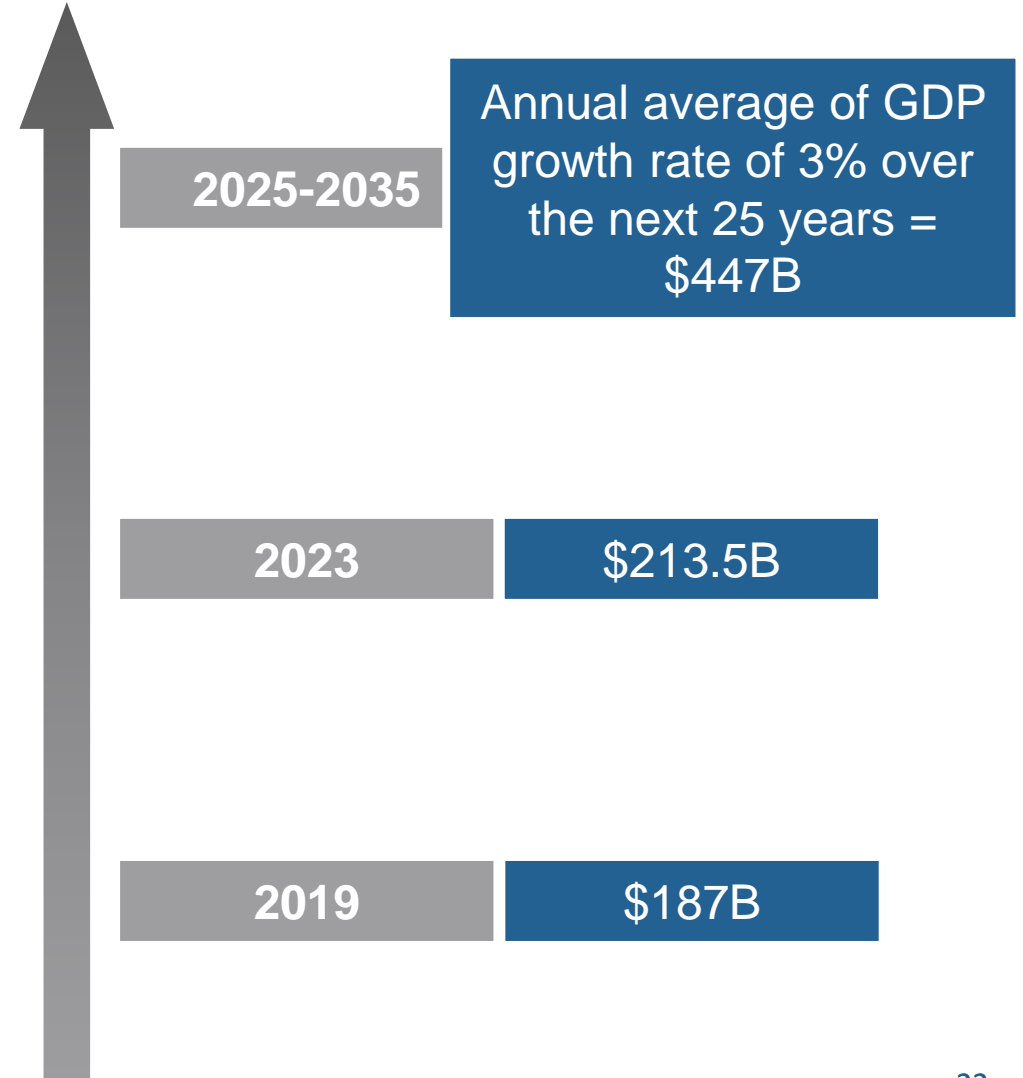


Inclusive Economic Development

Labour market inclusion, income and wealth distribution, economic security: rate of involuntary part-time work, gender unemployment rate, housing affordability index

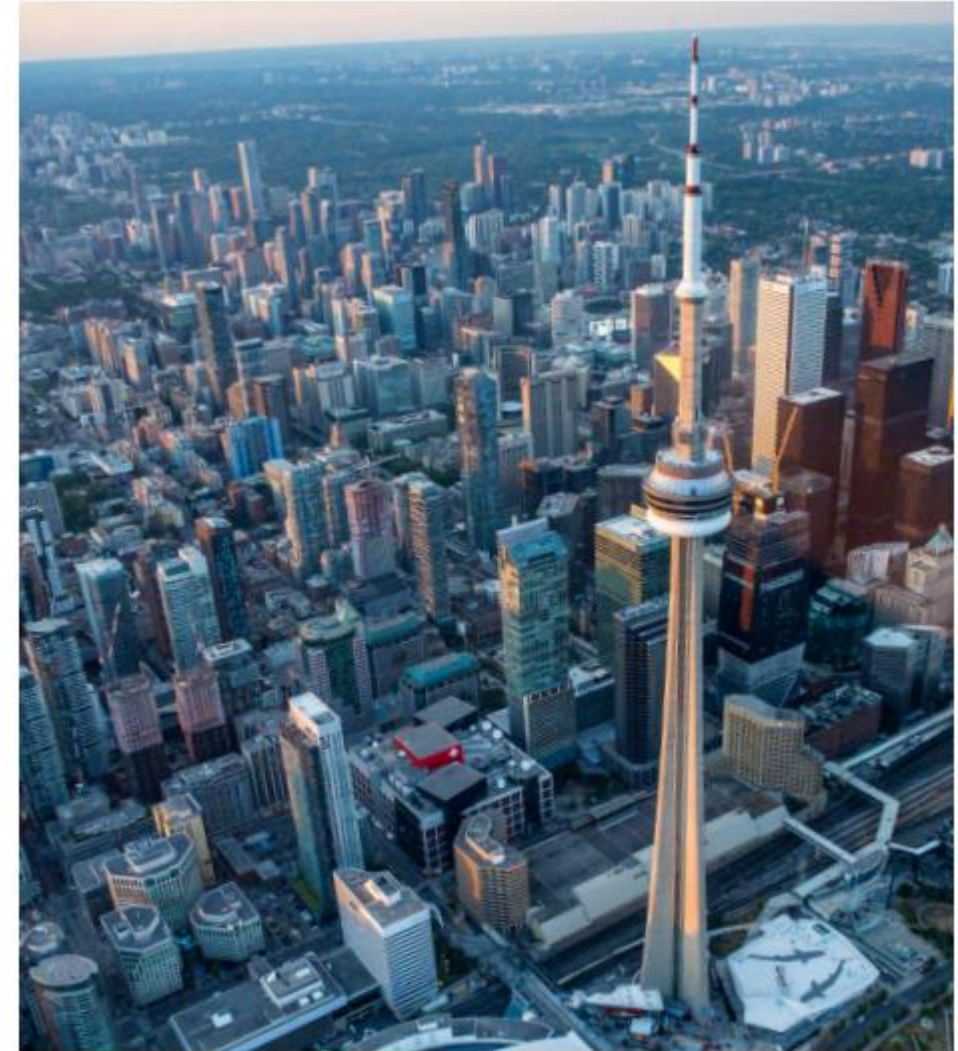
Anticipated Outcome: Macroeconomic

Taking all these actions together, from addressing quality of life and supporting small businesses to accelerating Toronto's high-value sectors, Toronto will be on a path to double its GDP in 25 years, with an estimated 50% increase in GDP per capita. The city will also be on the path to having a more inclusive economy that works for all its residents.



Next Steps

- A progress update will be presented to City Council for each of the implementation years.
- Success indicators will be assessed alongside relevant macroeconomic indicators, and impact of actions. New actions will be identified for the 2030-2035 term.
 - The implementation of the Action Plan is designed to be adaptive and responsive to changing economic and political circumstances to ensure economic success in Toronto's economy.
- For updates, check the *Sidewalks to Skylines City of Toronto* page: [Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy – City of Toronto](#)





Thank You