



TORONTO
REGION
BOARD OF TRADE



WORLD TRADE CENTRE®
TORONTO

Reimagining Recovery

A PATH FORWARD FOR OUR ECONOMY AND
THE BUSINESSES THAT POWER IT

MAY 2020

Driven by our mission and informed by our members, *Reimagining Recovery* is rooted in expert insights, designed in collaboration with government and industry leaders and organized around six priority work tracks essential to our shared success.

Summary

The Toronto Region Board of Trade (the Board) supports its members through advocacy, information and programs. Our mandate is to make business better.

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented crisis for our economy. Social distancing has shuttered most businesses and has others, where able, operating on a work from home or e-commerce basis. The resumption of more normalized business is only expected once a vaccine is in place. The period between now and a vaccine is expected to be fragile and uneven – months, possibly years away. Some suggest there may never be a vaccine.

In March 2020, the Board launched a regular [Business Insights Questionnaire](#) (BIQ) to monitor the impact on members. These findings have and will continue to inform our feedback to government. As businesses reported confusion about accessing available stimulus, we also launched [SupportBusiness.bot.com](#) – a one-stop portal with information on all available government and private sector programs. Unique to this portal is its live chat function supported by staff from the Board's [World Trade Centre Toronto](#). Presently, the portal attracts more than 1,700 hits per day. Additionally, we launched an online Business Continuity Series and Business Recovery Series featuring [webcasts and webinars](#) to provide information on government support programs and specialist sessions on topics such as cybersecurity in work from home environments and HR best practices during COVID-19.

Based on consultation with our committees and members, we have activated a recovery support framework. By convening the thinking of members and drawing in thought leadership from experts, including epidemiologists and behavioural scientists, we are mobilized to support our members with advocacy, information and programs.

This framework will merge the known efforts of others in the region to avoid duplication and foster a consolidated point of view from the business community for governments to consider as they navigate this new normal. Our intent goes beyond renewing business activities. Convening our business community's researchers, innovators and incumbents, we want to reimagine our future economy.

What are our planning assumptions?

FIRST: A three-stage recovery is likely, with the region toggling between stages

Current thinking suggests a three-stage recovery over 18 to 24 months, with economic activity resuming in phases. Until a vaccine is in place, we are likely to toggle between these stages in the case of successive waves of outbreak. The expected recovery stages are:

1. **Managed Return.** Some businesses reopen but distancing remains in place. Businesses will retool and promote hygiene in physical workplaces (through protective wear, disinfecting, temperature checks). Restaurants will begin to reopen with fewer tables. Staff will wear gloves and masks. Face coverings will be common in public.

Implications: productivity restrictions, many remain working from home, limited consumer market resumption. Stimulus programs remain in effect, and new stimulus may be added.

One Possible Base Case COVID-19 Duration Impact¹



2. **Pre-Vaccine Return to Business (Pre-V Return).** Social distancing is relaxed but remains in place. More businesses are functioning in an environment of ramped up testing. Mass transit restrictions are applied. Contact tracing and isolation is used on individuals in close proximity to a positive case. Partner country relationships emerge where testing and tracing standards are trusted. Designation of “trusted health traveller” a possibility for some as international travel resumes.

¹ <https://think.ing.com/articles/four-scenarios-for-the-global-economy-after-covid-19/>

Implications: emergence of staggered work hours to align with mass transit restrictions, working from home remains an option for some, consumer market resumption in sectors where close group contact is not a requirement (meaning major events, passenger aviation, mass transit remain impacted). Previous stimulus programs are modified or reduced. New stimulus programs, such as consumer incentives, may be added.

3. **Post-Vaccine Return to Business (Post-V Return).** With a trusted available vaccine in place a new “business as usual” returns. Globally, cities and countries offer competing incentives to attract business, events and investments to their markets. Domestically, job creation and consumer spending stimulus programs replace previous business liquidity programs.

OUR OBJECTIVE: To be a source of business input to government and readiness information for members. Our Business Continuity Advisory Group, formed in March, is our primary channel for this work. It is composed of executives from a range of sectors including the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, Metrolinx, private sector companies and Toronto Public Health.

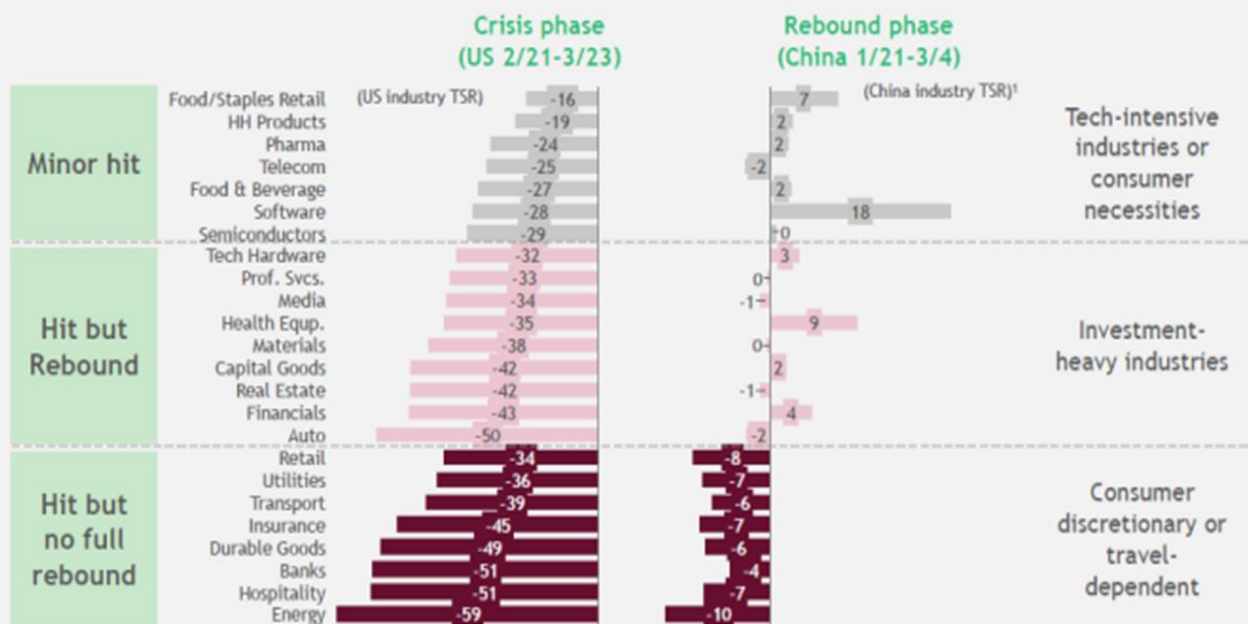
SECOND: Sectors will face different time horizons for recovery

Discussions with members across a range of industries highlight that not all sectors will recover or rebound at the same time.² For instance, consumer demand for passenger aviation is expected to be constrained until trusted country (testing and tracing) partnerships and, ultimately, a widely available vaccine are in place. Main street businesses like restaurants can expect demand to recover sooner in a Pre-V Return.

OUR OBJECTIVE: To bring together a consolidated view of sector recovery plans and horizons to provide input and advocacy to government, as well as to create member support programs.

² <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/17/the-places-a-covid-19-recession-will-likely-hit-hardest/>

Crisis & rebound trajectories vary widely by sector



1. 21 Feb (before international acceleration of outbreak) through 23 Mar. 2. 21 Jan (before lockdowns began) through 4 Mar (flattening period of curve of cases)
 Note: Based on top 500 companies by market cap in each region as of 12/31/19; Industries based on GICS definitions | Source: S&P Capital IQ, BCG Henderson Institute analysis

THIRD: Our urban region will need retrofitting to support a return from COVID-19

Main street, airports, mass transit, major event spaces, commercial spaces, shopping malls – there’s action we need to take now to ready-proof all these community spaces for our three-stage recovery.³ This doesn’t just mean future-proofing so that we are pandemic ready. This is ready-proofing our communities to support and accelerate our recovery path.

OUR OBJECTIVE: Surface core recommendations toward retrofitting the “physical realm” of the region and determine resource allocation that reflects these core recommendations.

³ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/24/how-our-cities-can-reopen-after-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

FOURTH: Our cities and the Innovation Corridor will need an orchestrated economic restart

Not only are our workers and businesses affected, but so too is the fiscal capacity of governments that rely on a healthy economy for their revenue.⁴ In the Canadian context, major urban centres are the biggest economic engines of our economy but are the most poorly financed. Canada's post-Confederation funding model can be our biggest recovery threat or opportunity. The country's largest urban centres bear a disproportionate burden for transit, housing and immigration funding, but they are also the locations of most of the country's economic activity and population.

Pre-COVID-19, the Innovation Corridor represented more than 20 per cent of Canada's GDP, 25 per cent of its population and was gaining recognition as a global innovation centre. In response to COVID-19, we require a co-ordinated, well-funded, multi-year program to stabilize our cities' financial situation and address our economic restart.

This goes beyond infrastructure funding for shovel ready projects that has been the historic response of provincial and federal governments. We need to anticipate how a COVID-19 recession will affect our economic zone and our municipalities. We need to define and fund economically enabling priorities while solving for regulatory gaps and market fragmentation to expediate recovery.

OUR OBJECTIVE: The Board's Economic Blueprint Institute (EBI) will tell the story of COVID-19's impact across the region through data driven insights. These insights will feed into a recovery playbook for government planning on COVID-19 recovery. The outputs will also help municipalities make decisions on where to seek funding, collaboration and third-party investments.

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/31/when-will-your-city-feel-the-fiscal-impact-of-covid-19/>

FIFTH: Businesses will benefit from moving digital

Like government, many of our businesses have internalized the impact of social distancing with an urgency to move their businesses digital – including front, middle or back office. Pre-COVID-19, the Board's Scale Up Institute was launching its Growth Development Program (GDP) to help companies grow. Coming through COVID-19, a modified GDP program is being developed to equip businesses to accelerate their recovery with the tools and expert insights to take their businesses digital.

The Recovery Activation Program (RAP) will be an immersive program to support enterprises as they enhance their digital connectivity and leverage opportunities through digital transformation. Participants who complete the program will graduate with a highly practical Digital Transformation Blueprint curated to their business needs.

OUR OBJECTIVE: Identify and provide program support to help businesses use digital activation to move through recovery to growth.

SIXTH: Getting back to trade

Before the pandemic disrupted global supply chains, trade comprised a significant component of the region's economic growth and will be just as important to our future prosperity. As we continue to guarantee a local supply of specific emergency products, including relaxing internal trade restrictions, we will continue to champion free and open international trade – holding our trade agreement partners to their commitments and continuing to develop new ones in opportune regions.

OUR OBJECTIVE: Reduce trade barriers across provinces and instill a sense of confidence in businesses looking to expand into new markets. Influence governments to support businesses as they grow internationally.

What is the framework's operating model?

Steering Cabinet

Senior leaders who help inform direction and support, as well as activate "postcard projects"

+6 work track groups:

Postcard Projects: Problems identified through recovery work requiring sector or cross-sector senior engagement to address. For instance, developing a stimulus proposal for absorbing fresh graduates into projects that address challenges elsewhere.

WORK TRACK ONE RECOVERY STAGES

- Outputs: Input to government. Information on readiness planning and how others are adapting to the conditions of each stage of recovery.
- Participants: The Board's Business Continuity Steering Group (comprised of members and public health officials).

WORK TRACK TWO SECTOR RECOVERY PLANS

- Outputs: Input to government. Board's consolidated view of sector recovery plans and horizons to enable advocacy and member support programs.
- Participants: Board's policy team lead, policy committees and sector association members, Toronto Global and Toursim Toronto staff.

WORK TRACK THREE RETROFITTING OUR URBAN REGION

- Outputs: Input to government. Member information on retrofitting requirements and options.
- Participants: ULI Toronto and Board's policy team lead, policy committees, ULI stakeholders and Tourism Toronto staff.

WORK TRACK FOUR CITIES & CORRIDOR BLUEPRINT

- Outputs: Input for government Member and sector recovery advocacy on regulatory gaps, market fragmentation pain points and economically enabling priorities.
- Participants: EBI and Toronto Global, municipal executives, Corridor chambers, economic development committee participants.

WORK TRACK FIVE BUSINESS RECOVERY PROGRAMS

- Outputs: Modelled after TAP, program support to help businesses move through recovery. Recovery Activation Program will help companies build digital readiness capabilities in their business.
- Participants: WTC-T, Scale-Up Institute, program partner organizations.

WORK TRACK SIX GETTING BACK TO TRADE

- Outputs: Virtual TAP and trade mission activation, targeted scale-up programming for businesses and sectors offering high demand products and services for international markets and advocacy to remove interprovincial barriers.
- Participants: WTC-T, Board's policy team, EBI, program partner organizations, foreign trade consulates.

The Steering Cabinet

This recovery support framework is led by a steering cabinet made up of senior leaders who can help inform our direction, guide our impact and support our action. They will help us foster collaboration across the Innovation Corridor, assist the Board with government advocacy and help us activate “postcard projects” for big problem areas where a broader plan is required – such as talent and immigration, or unlocking financial institutions and pension fund resourcing.

Jan De Silva

Toronto Region Board of Trade

Scott Beck

Tourism Toronto

Diane Brisebois

Retail Council of Canada

Mark Cohon

Toronto Global

Deborah Flint

Greater Toronto Airports Authority

Michael Friisdahl

Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment

Eric Gales

Amazon Web Service Canada

Meric Gertler

University of Toronto (& on behalf of Corridor Universities)

Richard Joy

Urban Land Institute Toronto

Iain Klugman

Communitech

Tony La Mantia

Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation

Mohamed Lachemi

Ryerson University

Joseph S. Mancinelli

LIUNA

Farah Mohamed

Toronto Region Board of Trade

Calin Rovinescu

Air Canada

Anne Sado

George Brown College (& on behalf of Corridor Colleges)

Chad Schella

Canada Post

Chuck Scott

Cushman & Wakefield

Michael Serbinis

League

Godyne Sibay

McCarthy Tétrault LLP

Luc Vilandré

TELUS Health and Payment Solutions

Mike Williams

Economic Development & Culture Division, City of Toronto

Yung Wu

MaRS Discovery District

Ex-officio:

Giles Gherson

Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Government of Ontario

James Meddings

FedDev Ontario, Government of Canada

Saad Rafi

Office of Recovery and Rebuild, City of Toronto

The Steering Committees

The six work tracks led by business and policy leaders will investigate six areas toward a consolidated vision of our economic future. The work of each of these tracks will help inform all three levels of government and be shaped by input received from our members, the business community and the Board's Young Professionals Network – a diverse and ambitious collective of more than 3,000 emerging leaders under the age of 40.

WORK TRACK ONE: Recovery Stages

How do we reopen businesses and what does their recovery look like in pre and post vaccine times?

Chair: Brenda Gardiner, Toronto Region Board of Trade

WORK TRACK TWO: Sector Recovery Plans

How does reopening and recovery differ by sector and what supports do they need?

Co-Chairs: Leigh Smout, World Trade Centre Toronto and Daniel Hengeveld, Toronto Global

Tables: Infrastructure; Energy; Health Care and Health Sciences; Financial; Tourism; Manufacturing; Mainstreet Business (Retail & Restaurants); Large Retail, Grocers and E-commerce; Technology and Innovation; Film, Music and Live Events.

WORK TRACK THREE: Retrofitting our Urban Region

How do we retrofit and redesign our physical spaces, buildings and infrastructure in a new COVID-19 reality?

Co-Chairs: Craig Ruttan, Toronto Region Board of Trade and Richard Joy, Urban Land Institute Toronto

Tables: Transportation; Civic Assets; Educational Institutions; Cultural; Public Realm; Commercial; Retail; Residential; Social Purpose Real Estate.

WORK TRACK FOUR: Cities and Corridor Blueprint

Based on emerging data and trends, what are the opportunities to reimagine and reboot our economy?

Co-Chairs: Marcy Burchfield, Economic Blueprint Institute and Terri O'Leary, Toronto Global

WORK TRACK FIVE: Business Recovery Programs

How can companies build digital readiness capabilities to deal with a new normal?

Chair: Michael Cascone, World Trade Centre Toronto

WORK TRACK SIX: Getting Back to Trade

How can we reduce trade barriers and instill a sense of confidence in businesses looking to expand into new markets?

Co-Chairs: José Antonio Santoyo, World Trade Centre Toronto and Raly Chakarova, Toronto Region Board of Trade

For more information about *Reimagining Recovery* or to get involved, visit our [portal](#).