



## **A PERMANENT MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN IS REQUIRED**

### **Six Principles Proposed**

A long term '*permanent municipal infrastructure plan*' tied to a solutions / results based approach to address our municipal infrastructure deficit is what is needed in our collective economic and social well being self-interest.

We suggest six principles are required to underpin a multi-generational approach to a problem incapable of fixing over a term shorter than 30 years.

***First, a permanent infrastructure plan is required*** no different that our 'permanent' investment in healthcare, education, recreation, public safety and the like.

Infrastructure is not of passing interest or unimportant to our economic and social well being. It is what enables and underpins our economy, and therefore quality of life. Investment in infrastructure on a permanent basis is our economic and social healthcare program no different than preventive medicine enables personal health. Let's accept that any investment plan must be permanent, though not inflexible.

***Second, the plan's purpose must be to invest in a sustained and strategic manner*** in assets which enable, create and open new opportunities for economic growth. Consider CentrePort Canada, Canada's first inland port and the port of Churchill which could be an enormous catalyst for economic growth and social well-being in the north - just two examples of many.

Such a strategy should not however ignore maintaining or rehabilitating key assets that already enable economic activity but require upgrading to maintain or enhance their value to the economy, and there are many.

***Third is innovation*** - embrace it. Just because we '*did this years ago*' doesn't mean we should do it the same way today. CAT scans, MRI, laser surgery are but few examples of innovation in healthcare. Does anyone quarrel that those investments generated lasting social benefits?

Composite fibers, fiber optics, remote sensing systems, new grades of asphalt and concrete products, awarding projects based upon innovation and service life costing. These are innovative principles which must become part of the design challenge (and opportunity) landscape to stretch the service life and reduce life maintenance costs of our infrastructure investments.

***Fourth, embrace partnerships*** with the private sector which is the engine of innovation, growth, jobs, prosperity, taxes and revenues to government.

Public Private Partnerships (P3S) or Alternative Financing Initiatives (AFIs) which enable the marriage of risk sharing, the benefit of price certainty, the ability to contractually manage exposure through performance based payments, and the return of an asset in prime condition at the end of the agreement's typical 25-30 year term, are options we cannot exclude from the mix. These are important tools to consider and use in the right set of circumstances.

***Fifth, identify and transparently dedicate new revenue streams*** as the existing revenues streams, even coupled with needed efficiency gains, are inadequate to the tasks at hand.

New streams - *preferably growth based* - should be dedicated and allocated to these purposes in a clear, transparent, transitional and accountable manner. Any such stream should be tied to a measureable agreed upon infrastructure investment plan.

***Sixth, any such investment plan should have required periodic transparent public reviews*** enabling experience based improvements and adjustments for the future. All of this should be legislated to give the public security, and ensure public sector investment purpose and discipline.

Respectfully our political leaders should demonstrate the necessary will to strike a group of subject matter experts, reflecting municipal, provincial and strategic stakeholder views and task them to develop a plan that incorporates at minimum the above principles, and then put that plan to the public for support.

The longer we chatter, noodle, consternate, blast and criticize, the greater the problem, challenge and cost, and the more will we sit and watch opportunity locate to other jurisdictions and countries '*who get it.*'

*A permanent municipal infrastructure plan* is required in our collective self-interest.

Respectfully submitted,



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