

MB Heavy response from Mayor Shari Decter Hirst, City of Brandon:

As Mayor of Brandon for the past four years, I have been proud to stand beside the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and my municipal colleagues across the province, as together we wrestle with the challenges of failing infrastructure.

Following the 2010 election, the City did its first inventory of the infrastructure gap and determined that we had a \$165 million shortfall. Addressing this gap was a central pillar in our City's first strategic plan, The Road Map for Growth. As well, we began a process of adding just over 1% of our annual budget to our Operating Budget just for potholes, curbs, and sidewalks. We now have \$1.5 million additional dollars over 2010 levels targeted specifically to this their repair and renewal.

The City of Brandon has invested in a comprehensive asset-management program "City Works" to gather the information about what roads, services, sidewalks, and curbs need repair. Taking the idea one step further, Council members now have direct access to certain elements in the asset management program to record and track specific resident infrastructure concerns.

But Brandon is not just challenged with repair and maintenance of existing infrastructure. As one of Western Canada's fastest growing cities, planning and implementing infrastructure is our investment in growth. The past four years have had a strong focus on residential growth to handle our housing boom, and the next four years will be about growing the economy. That will mean addressing a serious shortfall of unserviced designated industrial lands. Brandon currently has 580ha zoned industrial, but only 15ha of that is serviced. This must change if we are to take advantage of our economic opportunities in value-added agriculture, the oil sector, and manufacturing. As well, we are undergoing a significant expansion of our airport terminal and the surrounding lands need to have an infrastructure capacity to support business and light industrial expansion.

Of course, any discussion of infrastructure in Brandon must reference the Assiniboine River and our floods. We surpassed the 2011 three hundred year flood of record in the summer of 2014, and we have conditions to expect a similar flooding experience in Spring 2015. In partnership with the Federal and Provincial governments, we have made significant investment in flood protection including a permanent dike at 18th Street and Grand Valley Road, enhancements to the dikes along the banks of the Assiniboine, including storm drainage management, the addition of another lift station on the north side of the River, and pumps and other equipment that are now part of our regular flood fighting arsenal.

What needs to happen next is an engineering analysis of First Street, with an eye to raising it to allow traffic to continue to flow over the water, while floodwater flows below the street or causeway.

As was said earlier, infrastructure is an investment in growth. In many instances, there is an opportunity to collaborate with the private sector in funding that investment. With Federal and Provincial frameworks dealing with 3Ps, the City identified a gap in projects of less than \$25 million. This scale of project will be much more common than the larger \$50 and \$100 million initiatives governed by the Federal and Provincial frameworks. We recently passed a 3P Policy to provide a transparent framework for identifying and evaluating 3P opportunities.

Brandon has a very successful 3P at our Water Reclamation Facility where the private sector joined with the public sector to build an industrial waste water treatment facility.

Moving forward, the City of Brandon should continue to work closely with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, and our municipal colleagues to address the issue of funding the infrastructure deficit. This shortfall in resources is too large for Brandon to tackle alone. We will need both funding partners as well as lobbying partners to secure additional resources.