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 MHCA ASKS  
 PROVINCE  
 FOR BUILDING  
 MANITOBA FUND  
 DETAIL

## Bowman seeks 'clarity' on funds from province

*Aldo Santin, Winnipeg Free Press, May 11*

**M**ayor Brian Bowman says four weeks after the Pallister government tabled its budget, city hall still doesn't know what amount of funding it will be receiving from the province. Meanwhile, the province says it has released those numbers to city hall.

Despite repeated assurances from various elected and non-elected officials that funding to Winnipeg will be maintained at near last year's level, Mayor Brian Bowman said he and city staff have yet to receive confirmation from the province on the exact dollar amount.

"Our officials have been working very hard to get clarity on the 2017 provincial budget and its implications," Bowman told reporters Wednesday after the executive policy committee meeting. "What we were advised on budget day was that the operating and capital amounts would be the same as the 2016 support from the province. Our officials have been seeking clarity on that."

Bowman said officials from the city's finance department have met their provincial counterparts several times over the past month but have not been able to get them to confirm the exact amount of funding.

The only thing Bowman knows for certain is city hall is still seeking "clarity" — a word he used several times Wednesday in a brief Q&A session on the topic.

"We require clarity on their numbers and the detail. Our officials are working very hard to get that clarity. We don't have that clarity yet," he said. "We certainly require clarity, and we're trying to get that clarity from the province... We're seeking clarity."

Caitlin MacGregor, press secretary for Indigenous and Municipal Relations Minister Eileen Clarke, said civic officials know exactly how much they'll be getting.

MacGregor said civic officials have been told verbally and in writing the province will provide a total of \$115.5 million in operating funding through a new single, unconditional grant. She said Winnipeg will also receive \$24 million in 2017 through a new single grant for public safety.

"These grants total the same level of funding the city received in 2016," MacGregor said, adding the 2017 capital allocation for Winnipeg is \$109.2 million, which includes funding for the province's commitment to existing capital projects, including the Waverley Underpass and Stage 2 Southwest Rapid Transit, "as well as funding for new projects."

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 TRADE, NOT  
 TRUMP, WILL  
 PREVAIL IN  
 GLOBALIZED  
 ECONOMY

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 REVIEW OF  
 WORKPLACE  
 SAFETY AND  
 HEALTH ACT



# Spring Mixer

**Wednesday, May 31, 2017**

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ph: 204-947-1379 or fax: 204-943-2279**

**As per MHCA board policy, only registrations cancelled up to five business days prior to the commencement of this event will be refunded.**

## Advocacy works – update

# MHCA asks province for Building Manitoba Fund detail

The MHCA has asked for details from the Pallister government on its plans for the Building Manitoba Fund. Budget 2017 gave no clear details on the BMF, which is funded through retail sales tax revenues.

"We're curious about what has happened to the BMF, which previously was a distinct line item within the Municipal Relations department's budget," said MHCA President Chris Lorenc. "We've sent a number of emails to senior officials asking for detail -- seeking the same clarity that that Mayor Brian Bowman has asked for, too."

Budget 2017's "Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures" gives a global figure for provincial "funding to municipalities and related grants," through Municipal Relations. At \$361 million, it is about \$15 million less than was transferred in 2016/17, for municipal financial assistance, which included the BMF and operating assistance. However, it is difficult to make a direct comparison without detail on which programs are receiving what level of funding in 2017.

"We need to know that detail because the BMF is the program that transfers funding for core infrastructure investments to the municipalities," Lorenc said, noting: "The level of BMF funding is set in legislation – it's one-seventh of PST revenues for the year."

The Building Manitoba Fund is one of two related issues the MHCA has among its top advocacy concerns. The other is the fate of \$1 billion remaining for Manitoba in the federal government's New Building Canada Fund – half of which is federal; half is provincial – that has yet to be assigned to infrastructure works in the province. If applications for the funds are not approved by the end of April, 2018, the federal dollars will be transferred to Manitoba municipalities through the gas tax fund.

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# Trade, not Trump, will prevail in globalized economy

## Canadian economist tells Manitoba firms to gear up for opportunities

A wrecking ball swings both ways – and that’s the key thing to keep in mind when thinking about how protectionist winds out of the Trump administration may affect trade deals and the supply chains between our countries.

This was the heart of the message Peter Hall, chief economist at Export Development Canada, delivered at a lunch address Wednesday, sponsored by Manitoba Trade and Investment, a division of the provincial Growth, Enterprise and Trade department.

Hall does not believe – and points to some evidence to support his conclusion – that the chest-thumping at the Oval Office in Washington will materialize into broken trade deals and border taxes. At least not over the long term.

The reason is fairly simple: undoing free trade agreements and poking globalization in the eye will hurt America, too, Hall noted.

Protectionist measures – such as imposing a border adjustment tax for goods sold state-side – will hike prices of goods for Americans, who Hall described as among the most price-sensitive consumers in the world.

“We’re talking about a 10% tax on all consumer goods in the United States,” he noted.

Further, Canada is the No. 1 export market for 32 states in the U.S. Unravelling NAFTA or otherwise compromising the supply chain will result in job losses in those states.

The effects of anti-trade measures would be felt immediately – much faster than any return to the economy intended by the Trump administration’s efforts to “make America great again,” he said. Hall also said he actually sees a lot of blue sky and sunshine in the future for trading countries, and Canada and the provinces should position themselves now for expanded trade by building capacity to seize such opportunities.

There is real growth in global economies, as indicated by some convincing signs. First labour market participation has picked up in the United States, particularly in the cohort of “millennials” – those who had the misfortune of graduating right at the time when the 2008 great recession hit. They will enter the consumer market as their incomes rise, purchasing cars and houses.

And, conversations with purchasing managers in corporations in China, Singapore and elsewhere indicate that orders are rising quickly, evidence of pent-up demand and growth to come.

“We should be arming ourselves for the growth that’s coming our way.”

That means that Canadian companies ought to be increasing their capacity – to produce and to export.



Manitoba’s agri-food industry, for example, will feel this growth as the middle-class and incomes in developing countries rise.

Who would want to stand in the way of that potential prosperity?

“I believe that no leader in the world would want to do something that ruins the growth picture I’ve just painted.” And if a president does, Hall predicted, he will just as quickly undo such a policy, or tax, to repair the damage.

*Peter Hall, chief economist EDC  
Photo: Sean Hogan*



## The currency churn

*Peter G Hall, Vice President and Chief Economist*



Currency concerns seem to be rising again. I'm just one week into my month-long cross-Canada Let's Talk Exports tour sharing insights from our new Global Export Forecast, and based on conference questions and individual conversations, the loonie is once again blipping on the radar screen. Small wonder – with political uncertainty swirling and a nascent stumble in commodity prices, our dollar's near-term direction just became a little less clear. Will recent weakness persist? Are we flatlining? Or is a sharp upswing in the works?

Most of the concern seems focused on recent weakness. From the mid- to high-70-cent level in US dollar terms over the past year, the loonie has slid toward the 73 cent range, gradually losing steam. True, it seems a far cry from the air pocket the loonie hit in 2014. From its perch at 93 cents US in the middle of that year, the bird plummeted to the high-60-cent level by early 2016, following the earth-bound swoon in commodity prices. Our dollar staged a partial recovery – a relief to most – but it's the general down-trend since then that has captured the attention.

Commodity prices are at least part of the problem. To many, economic growth was supposed to send commodity prices the other way. Surely if the global economy was strengthening, prices of raw materials should rise, they reasoned. As such, the plunge in oil and base metals prices was interpreted as just another sign that the world economy was weak, and would remain so for some time. Yet since then, it appears that the world's big economic engines have actually been gaining momentum. What many analysts seem to have missed is that quantitative easing inflated commodity prices, and as growth prompted the Fed to wind the program down, prices lost their lift.

Here's the current dilemma: if commodity prices were artificially high for multiple years, and that spurred a lot of over-investment in the mining and energy sectors, then nobody really knows what true equilibrium pricing looks like; the market is still trying to find its feet. And as long as these key drivers of the currency meander, we can expect our dollar to do the same.

Interest rates are another factor. The Fed is in tightening mode, given looming capacity pressures in the US economy. Not so in Canada; high consumer debt levels and a top-heavy housing market suggest little need for an imminent rate run-up. Markets have long since priced this in to the currency, but any new signs of weakness weigh on the loonie.

Then there's the greenback. It rose sharply against all currencies as commodity prices sunk, and more recently with all the political bravado of the election and inauguration of the new President. At the same time, worries about the future of the UK and more existential questions about the EU weakened currencies across the pond. The Yen was able to capitalize somewhat, but the most recent movement has been a strengthening of all the major currencies against the USD. All the major non-commodity currencies, that is. Chalk that up to a moment of pre-summer stock-taking, assessments of relative economic progress and uncertainty about a few key commodity balances.

Where to from here? General uncertainty is bound to persist, but it still seems that current evidence is on the side of growth. The US job market remains robust, and the employment picture in the EU is not far behind. Business seems to agree that things are looking up. With the US economy taking the lead, the greenback is expected to maintain its strong level, but to gently lose a bit of its lift over the near term to economies that are playing catch-up. Emerging market demand for basic goods is expected to follow the lead, a positive signal for near-term commodity prices. However, commodity price gains will be tempered by ample product supplies, made available by the considerable investments that persistently high prices attracted to the oil and gas sector, and also to the mining industry.

These signals generally point to a Canadian dollar that will rise over the medium term period, but only very gently. Our forecast calls for the loonie to average 76 cents US this year, rising to 78 cents in 2018. Against the Euro, the Canadian dollar is expected to see 1.39 for 2017 as a whole, and to average 1.33 next year.

The bottom line? Despite current policy turmoil, the loonie seems in for a season of unusual – but welcome – stability.



*Lorenc and Red Tape Reduction panel (from left) Winkler Mayor Martin Harder, Borland Construction President Henry Borger and Gimli MLA Jeff Wharton.*

## Review of Workplace Safety and Health Act

The Pallister government has announced it is reviewing the Workplace Safety and Health Act, a routine review as required under Sec. 16(3) of that act. Manitobans are being invited to submit their views on the act's provisions.

Growth, Enterprise and Trade Minister Cliff Cullen said the statutory review, conducted by the minister's Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health, will focus on three main areas:

- ensuring existing requirements are adequate, clear and reasonable;
- reducing red tape and barriers to economic growth while ensuring necessary protections for the safety and health of workers; and
- identifying opportunities to improve

harmonization of legislation with other jurisdictions.

The MHCA, in its submission to the Red Tape Reduction task force earlier this year, made a number of recommendations regarding the WSH Act, relating to inspections and enforcement at heavy construction worksites.

The government has said individuals and organizations may provide feedback and suggestions for improvement of act, its regulations and administration. The submissions will be provided to the council for their consideration and the council will provide recommendations to the minister by Dec. 31. All proposals can be submitted to [WSHActReview@gov.mb.ca](mailto:WSHActReview@gov.mb.ca).

Submissions may be posted online and can be viewed at [www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/).



# Upcoming MHCA Meetings

MHCA Executive Committee  
MHCA Office  
May 17 - 12:00-4:00 PM

SAFE Roads  
MHCA Office  
September 27 - 12:00-1:30

MHCA Executive Committee  
MHCA Office  
November 21 - 12:00-4:00 PM

MHCA Executive Committee  
MHCA Office  
June 13 - 12:00-4:00 PM

Rental Rates Committee  
MHCA Office  
October 6 - 12:00-2:30

Rental Rates Committee  
MHCA Office  
December 1 - 12:00-2:30

Rental Rates Committee  
MHCA Office  
August 25 - 12:00-2:30 PM

MHCA Executive Committee  
MHCA Office  
October 25 - 12:00-4:00 PM

MHCA Executive Committee  
MHCA Office  
January 17, 2018 - 12:00-4:00 PM

MHCA Executive Committee  
MHCA Office  
September 6 - 12:00-4:00 PM

Rental Rates Committee  
MHCA Office  
November 3 - 12:00-2:30 PM

MHCA Board of Directors  
Location TBD  
January 24, 2017 - 12:00-4:00 PM

MHCA Board of Directors  
MHCA Office  
September 13 - 12:00-4:00 PM

MHCA Board of Directors  
RBC Convention Centre  
November 17 - 10:00-12:00 Noon



## THE ROAD TO PROSPERITY SEVEN PILLARS TO GROWING MANITOBA'S ECONOMY

In today's globally competitive business environment it is imperative that government create a climate that attracts new business and allows existing businesses to grow and thrive. For Manitoba to reach its full potential there are seven key public policy pillars that must lead economic and investment policies in the province:

### FISCAL COMPETITIVENESS

Manitoba must have an effective and fiscally prudent government committed to creating a competitive tax jurisdiction to attract and retain new investment.

### VENTURE CAPITAL

Commitment to the creation of an accessible venture capital fund and supportive tax credit policies to leverage investment in the growth of new and existing businesses.

### GLOBAL TRADE

Commitment to pursuing an expanded global trade profile for Manitoba which derives substantial economic benefit.

### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Commitment to a strategic, sustained, disciplined approach to investment in Manitoba's core infrastructure.

### ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

Commitment to the creation of an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy to ensure inclusion and partnership in economic growth policies.

### SKILLED WORKFORCE

Commitment to attracting, educating, training and retaining a skilled, responsive workforce is fundamental to ongoing economic growth.

### "NEW FISCAL DEAL" FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Commitment to address the existing fiscal framework between the province and municipalities to meet the challenges of the future.



## BROCK WHITE WINNIPEG 2017 EROSION AND RIP RAP SEMINAR

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### TUESDAY, MAY 23RD, 2017

7:30am: Registration 8:00am - 12:00pm: Seminar - Lunch will be served afterward  
Hilton Winnipeg Airport Suites, Stevenson Ballroom - 1800 Wellington Ave, R3H 1B2

### LEARN ABOUT

Profile Products: From soil agronomy to spray on products to Turf Reinforcement - soft armour vs rock Rip Rap replacement.  
Flexamat: Alternative to Rip Rap with considerable cost savings.

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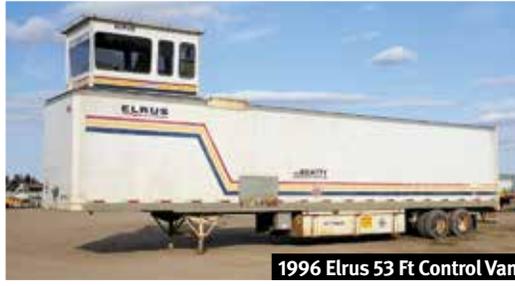
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## Researchers poke holes in new federal infrastructure bank

*The Canadian Press, May 8*

Ottawa – Researchers at a think tank headed by Canada’s former parliamentary budget watchdog are poking holes in the federal government’s plan to create a new infrastructure financing agency.

Kevin Page’s team at the University of Ottawa says the Trudeau government hasn’t shown a solid business case for its new infrastructure bank, which is designed to attract private dollars to finance public goods.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy says the Liberals could build more infrastructure by simply borrowing cash at interest rates lower than those offered to the private sector and passing on the savings to cities and provinces.

Instead, the private sector may look for returns higher than those rates, the institute argues in a blog post May 4. A 2015 analysis from J.P. Morgan Asset Management found the private sector would expect returns of up to 10 per cent for energy infrastructure and 12 per cent for toll roads.

“Why are we privatizing the returns for those (assets) when they would be going to the public sector?” said Randall Bartlett, the institute’s chief economist.

“There really isn’t a case that’s been made for the need for this bank overall, relative to existing tools that we have for infrastructure investment.”

A spokesman for Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi said cities and provinces can voluntarily use the bank, calling it just one tool in the Liberal infrastructure plan.

Brook Simpson said the bank will also work with Statistics Canada, cities and provinces to better track the country’s infrastructure needs – addressing another concern from Page’s team.

“This initiative will help the federal government and our partners better understand demand and usage, provide a national picture on the state of performance of public infrastructure, track impacts of infrastructure investments and deliver high-quality data analytics to inform policy and decision-making.”

The proposed bank would take \$35 billion in government funding to entice private investment in projects like public transit systems, highways and electrical grids that generate revenues through user fees or tolls. The Liberals predict they can leverage three or four times the federal investment in private dollars for projects in three key areas: trade corridors, green infrastructure and public transit.

The legislation to create the bank is contained in a budget bill that’s currently at second reading stage in the House of Commons.

Government officials have looked to sell the bank to private pension funds as a way to ensure returns for their members.

At the same time, civil servants involved in the bank’s creation continue to talk about the new agency with stakeholders in meetings held under the condition that nothing they say be directly attributed to them – known as Chatham House rules.

At one such meeting in February, those in the audience were told that the timing and design of federal support would look to minimize the amount of government support needed to make a project financially viable.

The detail is contained in a presentation given at the meeting and obtained by The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act.



## Making safety a habit

### *WORKSAFELY™ Back to You with Don Hurst*

This past week, businesses across North America put a sharp focus on health and safety as they participated in the annual North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week.

Started in 1997, NAOSH Week presents a great opportunity to focus, reinforce and strengthen commitment to workplace safety and health.

NAOSH Week serves as a call to action for businesses throughout our province to focus on safety and health, with the ultimate goal of all workers going home safe at the end of every work day.

WORKSAFELY™ is proud to support NAOSH Week with the message of making safety a habit.

This week highlights the importance of making a commitment to workplace health and safety and following through. For an employer this means communicating with your employees on safety and health practices. New and returning employees will benefit from orientations that focus on making safety a habit.

Everyday, all workers must play an integral part in all aspects of a company's safety and health management system. Achieving and maintaining your COR™ certification, shows your company's commitment to making safety a habit for life.

## KNOW YOUR WORKSAFELY™ ADVISOR

### **Don Hurst, B.A., M.A. (Econ.)**

Director, WORKSAFELY™ Education and Training  
E: don@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9051 C: 204-291-4740

### **Ed Gregory, NCSO, OH&S Cert.**

WORKSAFELY™ Safety Advisor, Southern Region  
E: ed@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9058 C: 204-227-6932

### **Randy Olynick, CRSP**

WORKSAFELY™ Safety Advisor, Eastern Region  
E: randy@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9057 C: 204-295-3876

### **Trevor Shwaluk, B.P.E**

WORKSAFELY™ Safety Advisor, Central Region  
E: trevor@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9061 C: 204-871-0812

### **Dave McPherson**

WORKSAFELY™ Safety Advisor, Northern Region  
E: dave@mhca.mb.ca C: 204-271-2088

### **Phil McDaniel, OH&S Cert., P. GSC, NCSO, CRM**

COR™ Program Development & Quality Control Advisor  
E: phil@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9059 C: 204-997-5205

### **Jackie Jones, CAE**

WORKSAFELY™ COR™ Program, Education and Training Advisor  
E: jackie@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9054 C: 204-509-0384

### **Sarah Higgins, OH&S Cert.**

WORKSAFELY™ Client Services Advisor  
E: sarah@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9060 C: 204-979-3971

### **Kristen Ranson**

WORKSAFELY™ Administrative Assistant  
E: kristen@mhca.mb.ca T: 204-594-9056 C: 204-330-3520

To contact your WORKSAFELY™ advisor assigned to your area, please see [mhca.mb.ca/worksafely/know-your-advisor](http://mhca.mb.ca/worksafely/know-your-advisor)

# Training Schedule

WINNIPEG - MHCA Office  
3-1680 Ellice Ave.

**TO REGISTER,  
PLEASE CONTACT:**  
Kristen Ranson  
kristen@mhca.mb.ca

## MAY 2017

- 15-16 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence
- 17 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management
- 18-19 COR™ Auditor
- 30 Train the Trainer

## JUNE 2017

- 9 Transportation of Dangerous Goods 1/2 day AM
- 12 Flagperson 1/2 day AM
- 12 Committee Representative Training 1/2 day PM
- 13-14 Traffic Control Coordinator
- 15 Excavation and Trenching 1/2 day AM
- 15 Auditor Refresher 1/2 day PM (no charge)
- 19-20 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence
- 21 COR™ Principles of Health and Safety Excellence
- 22-23 COR™ Auditor
- 27 Train the Trainer

# Construction Safety Excellence™



You're invited to attend our next  
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**Where:** Holiday Inn – Airport/ Polo Park  
1740 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg MB

**When:** May 16, 2017 8:30am – 10:30am

**Agenda:**

- SAFE Work Manitoba update
- Workplace Safety and Health update
- Click Before You Dig and locates update
- Worksafely update

Please RSVP to Kristen Ranson by May 10th at kristen@mhca.mb.ca or 204-594-9056

