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Accelerate street works procurement, accelerate construction

Renewed interest at Winnipeg city hall for faster construction of street works has sparked a response from MHCA for better procurement within the city's local and regional street renewal program to make better use of Winnipeg's short construction season.

"Accelerating construction has to go hand-in-hand with improving procurement, which directly can mean next year's street construction contracts are advertised much earlier for bids," MHCA President Chris Lorenc said.

MHCA has made accelerated procurement a core goal of its work with Winnipeg's city council and administration. Adopting 150% of city hall's street construction program each year, for example, allows future projects to be designed and 'on the shelf' in the event that good weather lasts longer into the fall.

More efficient procurement would lead to advertising construction tenders much earlier in the year, so the work starts as soon as the thaw is out of the ground. That would mean more construction is completed, and allow the City of Winnipeg to get more value out of the budget, as bids are made when work is scarce.

The industry now works evenings and weekends, where the project requires it and conditions permit. Suggestions have been made that crews should work through the night, 24/7. The MHCA says this is impractical and hazardous. First, in Winnipeg almost all streets touch on residential neighbourhoods. Identified risks to workers include fatigue and reduced visibility.

As well, costs will rise: Toronto found that all-night construction hiked costs markedly due to overtime rates for labour.

"We are saying 'no' to 24/7, but we fully agree delivery of the street renewal program can be improved and more construction can get done in a season," Lorenc stressed.

Accelerated road construction is expected to be raised when committee and council meetings resume in September.



Cities need infrastructure solution

Chris Lorenc, Winnipeg Free Press, July 18



It is a rare day when a municipality makes a unilateral, public bid to draw cash for “regionally significant” infrastructure funding from the federal government. But that’s what the City of Winnipeg did last week.

On Wednesday, city council will be asked to approve the strategy that could put an additional \$182 million into its regional street renewal program between 2018 and 2023. The federal cash flow, proposed to come from the New Building Canada Fund (NBCF), would bring total forecast investment in regional streets to \$546 million.

The motion is clearly intended to nudge the provincial Tory government’s hand. This application needs a nod from the province, which to date has not yet moved to take up the roughly \$527 million that remains unallocated to Manitoba under the NBCF. The federal funding, which falls out of the provincial government’s reach if projects are not jointly approved by next March 31, has to be cost-shared with provincial and municipal dollars.

Winnipeg’s proposal – preceded by a letter seeking support from the province – is timed to coincide with its 2018 budget-preparation schedule, now underway. Regional streets, which enable and sustain existing and new economic growth (thereby qualifying under the NBCF), are effectively “shovel-ready” projects that can be completed within the timeline set out by the federal government.

It is understandable why Winnipeg has gone this route.

First, there’s the infrastructure investment deficit, last pegged at \$7.4 billion (in 2009 dollars). We await an update to that figure, but Winnipeggers know intimately the condition of their roads, streets, sidewalks – and the rising need for active transportation facilities, which are becoming increasingly popular. There is only one way to backfill that hole, and that’s through strategic, purpose-driven investment.

Second, the provincial government in Budget 2017 made clear it is constrained in its expenditures across departments, including transfers to municipalities. The funding-transfer formula in the Building Manitoba Fund, which tied municipal infrastructure transfers to PST revenues (i.e. a growth tax) is being repealed. As a result, municipalities are no longer able to forecast with any certainty the level of infrastructure funding transfers from the province.

That forecasting certainty is crucial to municipalities, which shoulder 60% of public infrastructure assets, yet collect just eight cents of every tax dollar. (Similarly, provincial governments look to multi-year funding commitments from Ottawa expressly so they, too, have some forecasting certainty for critical priorities.)

And that brings us to the real problem, and the need for a real, workable solution. Cities, being creatures of provincial governments, have limited access to revenue sources. The big one is property taxes. Put your hands up, Winnipeggers, if you think your property tax bill holds a lot more room for hikes.

Winnipeg's city council has already taken a responsible approach to property taxes, with incremental increases that include one per cent each year dedicated by bylaw for local street renewal and another one per cent for regional streets. But Winnipeg, like every other Manitoba municipality, has always relied on predictable provincial help to fix its roads.

The provincial government has correctly signalled loud and clear that its top priority is getting the books back to balance, and doing that demands restraint in all quarters. This means that municipalities are set to shoulder an even greater load to maintain public infrastructure. And that sets them up for every year going, cap in hand, to Broadway to make the case for cost-sharing or transfers.

What this illustrates is that different governments have different and sometimes competing agendas. But on a more basic level, it pulls into focus the dysfunctional relationship that municipalities are caught in with their provincial masters — a relationship the Pallister government has inherited. It explains in part why cities and towns make faint headway against their infrastructure-investment deficits.

What's the fix?

What municipalities need is a new fiscal arrangement, one that balances responsibilities, roles and resources better, and frees them from the Oliver Twist scenario every year at budget time. A possibility of a new fiscal arrangement would see the provincial government making tax room, and granting new authority for municipalities to levy, for example, their own consumption tax dedicated to public purposes, like strategic investment in infrastructure to grow the economy.

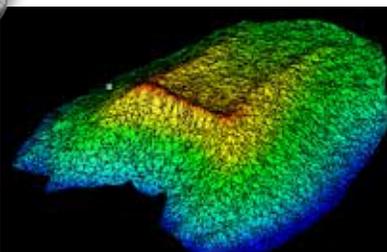
The Pallister government has pledged to roll back the PST by one percentage point in its first term. That makes this an auspicious time for a serious discussion about new relationships that lets the province accomplish its deficit-fighting goal while respecting municipal challenges and goals.

Winnipeg's regional roads, which carry 80% of all traffic, need investment certainty now – agreed. But Manitoba's municipalities require a long-term solution to an old revenue problem arising from an antiquated, dysfunctional governing relationship. We need provincial and municipal commitment to collaboratively and a better way to meet that more pressing need.



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Advocacy Works!

Municipal pits and quarries permitting under review

Aggregate producers are wise to have a good understanding of the needs and sensitivities of the community before submitting formal application and heading to a public hearing to develop a new pit or quarry, municipal officials agreed at a meeting of a provincial advisory committee Tuesday.

Sometimes applicants have not done their homework, either in reaching out to residents, those within nearby neighbourhoods or to municipal elected officials. And when they appear at a public hearing, they are surprised and unable to address concerns that are raised, which can ultimately work against approval, the Pits and Quarries Advisory Committee heard.

The advisory committee was struck earlier this spring at the MHCA's request, to address a number of ongoing issues with respect to bylaws, conditional-use applications and development agreements, the speed with which they are approved and the fact that increasingly they are failing to get permits.

The committee is composed of reeves and officials from municipalities surrounding Winnipeg, where high-value aggregate resources are located, aggregate producers, the MHCA, the AMM and a number of senior officials of various interested government departments.

Tuesday's meeting was the second to date, and saw municipal officials describe their bylaws, development agreements and approvals processes. All RMs agreed that their processes could be improved, and the next step of the committee's work involves review of those various municipal documents, maps of resource location and a scan of best permitting practices, including in other provinces' municipalities.

"Through the Advisory Committee we're looking to give municipalities and the provincial government recommendations for what makes for smooth, fair and constructive approval processes and for consistent application of rules for opening and operating pits or quarries," MHCA President Chris Lorenc said. "If we can find bylaws, for example, from another jurisdiction that has gone through this process and now sees smoother permit applications and approvals that benefit the community and the industry, then that would be worth the Advisory Committee's consideration."

The committee has settled its terms of reference and expects to have a series of meeting over the next months, aiming to present a report by the end of the year.

In other advocacy news, Lorenc appeared before Winnipeg city council Wednesday to speak in support of the city's proposed application for funds under the federal New Building Canada Fund. Lorenc told council that the MHCA is supportive of this stop-gap measure for investment in regional roads, but he urged Winnipeg to consider a long-term solution to the chronic need of municipalities to convince higher levels of government to join in the investments of municipal priorities.

He also stressed that critical projects, such as the extension of Chief Peguis trail, need city council's full attention and effort. Other federal funding programs can help to get them built, Lorenc said.

For the full story on the MHCA proposal of a new fiscal deal for municipalities, see Page 2.

Upcoming MHCA Meetings

Rental Rates Committee MHCA Office August 25 - 12:00-2:30 PM	SAFE Roads MHCA Office September 27 - 12:00-1:30	Rental Rates Committee MHCA Office November 3 - 12:00-2:30 PM	Rental Rates Committee MHCA Office December 1 - 12:00-2:30
MHCA Executive Committee MHCA Office September 6 - 12:00-4:00 PM	Rental Rates Committee MHCA Office October 6 - 12:00-2:30	MHCA Board of Directors RBC Convention Centre November 17 - 10:00-12:00 Noon	MHCA Executive Committee MHCA Office January 17, 2018 - 12:00-4:00 PM
MHCA Board of Directors MHCA Office September 13 - 12:00-4:00 PM	MHCA Executive Committee MHCA Office October 25 - 12:00-4:00 PM	MHCA Executive Committee MHCA Office November 21 - 12:00-4:00 PM	MHCA Board of Directors Location TBD January 24, 2017 - 12:00-4:00 PM

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MHCA addresses barriers to working in other provinces – reciprocal recognition of COR™

The WORKSAFELY™ director and staff have been working over the last several months to assist MHCA members and COR™ certified companies overcome barriers to working in other provinces, specifically relating to the reciprocal recognition of WORKSAFELY™ COR™ in Saskatchewan.

Recently, a number of Manitoba-based heavy construction companies have experienced challenges in having their COR™ recognized when bidding on government projects in Saskatchewan. Companies have been refused reciprocal recognition of their COR™ by the Heavy Construction Safety Association of Saskatchewan (HCSAS) on several grounds:

- They may have not worked in Saskatchewan for more than a year and their HCSAS certification or recognition has lapsed. (Manitoba recognizes the COR™ program of companies in good standing from other jurisdictions.)
- They may have worked on a job in Saskatchewan in the last year but failed to notify HCSAS (A stipulation not required of Saskatchewan companies).
- They lacked specific training provided by HCSAS on Saskatchewan legislative requirements. (Manitoba only requires non-resident companies to demonstrate compliance with Manitoba-specific legislation. We recognize others' training and do not require companies to actually take our training.)
- HCSAS also requires non-resident companies to become fully certified in HCSAS COR™ if a job lasts longer than 3 months or if total Saskatchewan company payroll in a year exceeds \$1.5 million. (Manitoba only requires that a company have a valid COR™ from a CFCSA member association with a completed Manitoba supplement.)

In the least, these rules add unnecessary paperwork, cost and anxiety to the bidding process in an extremely competitive market, where every dollar counts. More so, such actions unfairly deny Manitoba-based companies the opportunity to compete on a level playing field with their Saskatchewan counterparts in that market. In this scenario, COR™ is being used as a barrier rather than an enabler to free trade across jurisdictions.

The national COR™ standard has always been intended to be a vehicle for reciprocal recognition of respective Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Association members' provincial safety program COR™ requirements, and not as a trade barrier. The national COR™ standard specifically is intended as the verification that an accredited company has met national safety and health requirements, for ease of movement across provincial borders.

The COR™ program was never intended to be and should not be used as a barrier to the movement of companies across provincial borders.

The MHCA strongly supports the national COR™ program and the principles of reciprocity and we are working to address the challenges that have arisen in Saskatchewan. Specifically, we have taken the following steps:

- We have worked directly with our HCSAS counterparts to sort out specific problems individual companies may have had to ensure reciprocal recognition of their COR™ program for bidding purposes.
- WORKSAFELY™ staff has taken HCSAS training so that we provide the same training to MHCA companies in Manitoba when needed, reducing companies' travel and training costs. We delivered the first Saskatchewan Safety Excellence Leadership course the week of July 10.
- We have been working with HCSAS to eliminate the arbitrary administrative practices applied to Manitoba companies that act as barriers to trade.
- We have spoken with both the Saskatchewan WCB and the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association to confirm that SCSA is available as a COR™ reciprocity alternative for MHCA companies should issues with HCSAS not be resolved in our favour.

MHCA WORKSAFELY™ will continue working with other jurisdictions to ensure that we are equipped to assist our companies before bidding or working in other provinces, and to minimize any barriers that may exist. However, if you are bidding or planning on bidding on work in other provinces, here is what you need to know:

WORKSAFELY™ staff have working relationships with all other jurisdictions. We know that certain jurisdictions may have unique administrative hurdles, training requirements and reporting requirements that need to be completed prior to bidding or working in another province.

We can help.

So, if you are planning on bidding or working in other jurisdictions, please contact Don Hurst or Phil McDaniel at 204-947-1379, who can help you navigate the reciprocity process.



Chris Lorenc, President, MHCA



Don Hurst, Director, MHCA WORKSAFELY™ Program



2017 MHCA Annual Golf Classic

Attention All Team Captains

If you have not submitted the names of the golfers on your team for the MHCA Golf Classic, please do as soon as possible to christine@mhca.mb.ca

Only registrations cancelled prior to July 20th, 2017 will be refunded. *There are teams on the waiting listing, but they are not obligated to take your team spot if you cancel after July 20th.*

The tournament is a texas scramble with a shot gun start at 11:00am at the Pine Ridge and Elmhurst Golf Courses.

Province amends vehicle registration regulation to provide increased reciprocity

Changes necessary to comply with New West Partnership Trade Agreement: Pedersen

Government of Manitoba News Release, July 19

The Manitoba government is amending its Vehicle Registration Regulation to bring the regulation into full compliance with the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, Infrastructure Minister Blaine Pedersen announced today.

“These changes will promote trade and ease the free movement of goods across provincial borders,” said Pedersen. “This is another important step in achieving the expanded business and partnership opportunities created through the New West Partnership.”

The proposed amendments would impact vehicles used for commercial purposes from New West Partnership jurisdictions, which include British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The amendments take effect on Jan. 1, 2018. The reciprocity is limited to a segment of vehicles including vehicles used for the transportation of property, have two axles and have a registered gross vehicle weight of less than 11,794 kilograms. This could include cube vans, delivery vehicles and trades vehicles, such as those used by electricians, carpenters and welders.

Vehicles registered in Manitoba and operated out of province will have registration reciprocity for 90 days in New West Partnership jurisdictions, which is an increase from the current limit of seven days per year. Vehicles registered in Manitoba and operated only in the province or those operating under the International Registration Plan will not be affected.

The Manitoba Driver and Vehicles Act requires certain vehicles used for commercial purposes to be registered or permitted for use in Manitoba on the first day of operation in the province, unless registration reciprocity is provided by agreement or regulation. Manitoba is party to two other agreements that provide registration reciprocity for member jurisdictions – the International Registration Plan and the Canadian Agreement on Vehicle Registration.

Manitoba joined the New West Partnership Trade Agreement on Jan. 1, 2017, joining British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The agreement strengthens and expands Canada’s largest, barrier-free interprovincial market. Manitoba’s participation creates an open, common market of more than 11 million people, with a combined gross domestic product of more than \$750 billion.



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A comeback for global trade?

Peter G Hall, Vice President and Chief Economist



It has been a dreary decade for international trade. From the heights in 2008, global trade flows plunged, staged a quick partial revival, then went into a holding pattern from then until now. In terms of trade intensity, we are far from what we used to be, and many are resigned to our current state as a permanent new normal. The debate on the future of trade has reached a fever pitch, and resulted in a lot of public acrimony. In the context of trade's track record and the public backlash against its supporting architecture, is a comeback even possible?

Broadly-based disappointment in trade performance is understandable. After all, hopes were so high that in a world of static and even declining populations, the spread of trade would include masses of new consumers and increase productivity through globalization of supply chains. In fact, hopes were so fixed on trade as a solution to other fundamental weaknesses in the economy that they remained steadfast for years following the recession. It is only very recently that globalization has fallen afoul of the average voter – in effect, patience has run out.

Are the detractors right? Did we wrongfully place so much faith in trade and what it could accomplish? Were we wrong to think that the success experienced in the last cycle was an unlocking of centuries of hidden economic activity that was going to take a lot of time to fully realize? Maybe past progress was just an illusion, or maybe it was real, but stamped with a “best before” date that was a whole lot sooner than we thought. These doubts hold a lot of appeal among the disenfranchised in the current cycle.

For evidence, detractors point to the structural impediments that they believe globalization gave rise to. How about financial sector woes, exacerbated by the global reach of large institutions and the damaging domino effects they could perpetrate in the event of one or two key institutions collapsing? Or the excesses in capacity that were created in the last cycle, many of which are still being paid for? Add to that the public bailout of the economy, which increased government debt levels across the world to levels previously considered untenable.

These and other structural developments have eroded confidence in the construct of our system. But are we giving up on this architecture just as the ‘system’ appears to be healing itself? Our view has long been that the business cycle is poised to come to the rescue just as these arguments are intensifying. If so, there should be evidence out there that things are happening in the economy – positive things – that we have not seen since the Great Recession.

Thankfully there is a growing list of ‘new’ events that fill the bill. First, labour force inclusion. Throughout the post-recession period, whole chunks of the labour force in both the US and Europe have been bypassed due to insufficient growth. The latest data show that at long last, participation of these groups is rising again. Second, Western World confidence is back in ways thought unlikely just a year or two ago. Third, business investment seems finally to be responding to tightening industrial capacity conditions in what could prove to be a grand revival of building activity. A fourth and likely most significant development is that monetary tightening is now occurring on a much broader base, following the lead of the Fed in unwinding one of history's greatest periods of ultra-loose policy – one of the clearest signs that economic conditions are finally hitting their stride.

If this is the case, then a fifth indication will not be far behind. If the economy is getting back on its feet for the first time in seven or more years, then with no radical change in economic architecture, we can safely assume that global trade intensity will start to recover some of the ground lost during the Great Recession. Capacity constraints and cost considerations will inevitably turn businesses in tighter growth zones to look for solutions outside of national borders in ways that brought great past benefit. In a good many emerging market locations, there is lots of idle capacity and a willingness to re engage.

The bottom line? It has taken a long time – far longer than usual – to achieve the preconditions for a normalization of growth. The extraordinary delay has made us all much more skittish about the sustainability of growth. Current momentum suggests that global trade will be the next beneficiary. Best to get ready for it!



**Canadian
Construction
Association**

Stormwater infrastructure funding desperately needed: report

Angela Gismondi, Daily Commercial News, July 13

With the occurrence of extreme climatic events on the rise, three organizations have partnered to determine how to weather the storm.

A joint-report entitled *Weathering the Storms: Municipalities Plead for Stormwater Infrastructure Funding*, commissioned by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario and the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association (OSWCA), confirms stormwater infrastructure in Ontario is under tremendous strain with funding and resources extremely limited.

The purpose of the report was to assess the province's ability to cope with the impending impacts of climate change and severe weather patterns by looking at the condition of stormwater infrastructure and the type of asset management planning that is carried out in municipalities across Ontario.

Surveys were sent to all 444 Ontario municipalities and 55 were completed and returned. Respondents were asked to remain anonymous and data was collected to generate recommendations for decision-makers. All recommendations centre around the importance for municipalities to develop Stormwater Infrastructure Asset Management Plans.

"Understanding what the condition of municipal infrastructure and stormwater infrastructure is like for municipalities is important for all three organizations," said Mark Hartley, a water resources engineer and OSPE member, adding municipalities need to prepare standalone management plans that include details of both engineered and natural structures including the replacement, operational and maintenance costs.

"There are a number of questions that need to be answered. The starting point for us is to say, just like other systems, we need to understand what those assets look like, what is their condition like, so we can provide some foundation to make decisions in the future."

According to the report, it is estimated that \$1.2 billion would be needed to replace stormwater infrastructure in six focus municipalities alone, with populations ranging from under 50,000 to more than 750,000. As this funding gap increases across Ontario, so will the economic and environmental impacts caused by deficient stormwater management systems, the report indicates. Fifty-eight per cent of the municipalities that responded to the survey reported limited to no engineered stormwater management infrastructure.

In 2016, 16 municipalities had emergencies that required repairing damaged stormwater infrastructure at an overall cost of \$2.1 million.

Municipalities need to have a dedicated source of funding for stormwater systems to mitigate the impact of extreme weather events, said Giovanni Cautillo, executive director of the OSWCA.

"People are starting to get their head around a dedicated system. How to get that dedicated system is to ensure that you have dedicated funds," said Cautillo. "You have a number of municipalities who are now charging a stormwater fee that is then put back into the infrastructure in order to ensure that they have longevity."

While it may be viewed as a tax by constituents, people need to understand why it's necessary, he said.

"The 100 year storm is no longer every 100 years," said Cautillo. "If you don't have a system that is able to handle that capacity you're going to get flooding and the flooding ends up costing everyone in premiums on insurance, in damages being done to their homes, basements, possessions."

Cautillo said it's important to look at the water system holistically, not piecemeal. In the past, governments have focused on drinking water because of E-coli contamination, as was exemplified in Walkerton, Ont. in a situation that killed seven people in 2000. Then they looked at sewer systems because of the necessity from the health and safety standpoint. Now they are realizing that stormsewers need to be looked at as well because they are all part of the same system.

"Because it's out of sight, it's out of mind...nobody puts thought toward it unless it's a problem," said Cautillo. "When you do have flooding that's when you say, 'we may need a bigger pipe here because of capacity issues.' By that time it's too late."

The report demonstrates stormwater management assistance needs to be considered a funding priority by the provincial government.

"We can then go with a document to politicians and explain to them there is a need in the industry and the requirement is such that you can't rest on your laurels, you have to act," Cautillo stated.

The provincial government is looking at regulations with respect to municipal infrastructure and through the report, the partnering organizations are encouraging municipalities to get their stormwater management asset plans started and completed in a timely manner so they are ready when funding does become available, said Hartley.

Some municipalities have started it with their own staff and some of their own funding, while others have said that they are looking to outsource it. Either way, Hartley said it's a strain on their budget and their existing annual work schedule.

"Their staff already have lots on their plates as it is. By adding this is a challenge for them," said Hartley. "There is a recognition that it needs to be done but there needs to be some resources made available. Whether those resources are financial or staffing or what have you, it's easier said than done to get these plans prepared."



WORKSAFELY™ launches E-News

This week WORKSAFELY™ released its inaugural WORKSAFELY™ E-news. The E-news is written for managers, safety personnel and workers directly involved in safety in the heavy construction industry. E-News puts “news you can use” directly into your mailbox.

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- tools, such as safety talks and audit advice
- WORKSAFELY™ training schedule
- industry safety developments, including new COR™ companies and individual achievements such as NCSO certification

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To contact your WORKSAFELY™ advisor assigned to your area, please see mhca.mb.ca/worksafely/know-your-advisor

MHCA SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Effective May 15 until September 1, 2017

Monday: 7:45 am - 4:30 pm
(lunch 12:00 pm-12:30 pm)

Tuesday: 7:45 am - 4:30 pm
(lunch 12:00 pm-12:30 pm)

Wednesday: 7:45 am - 4:30 pm
(lunch 12:00 pm-12:30 pm)

Thursday: 7:45 am - 4:30 pm
(lunch 12:00 pm-12:30 pm)

Friday: 7:30 am - 12:00 pm

Closed Saturday and Sunday

