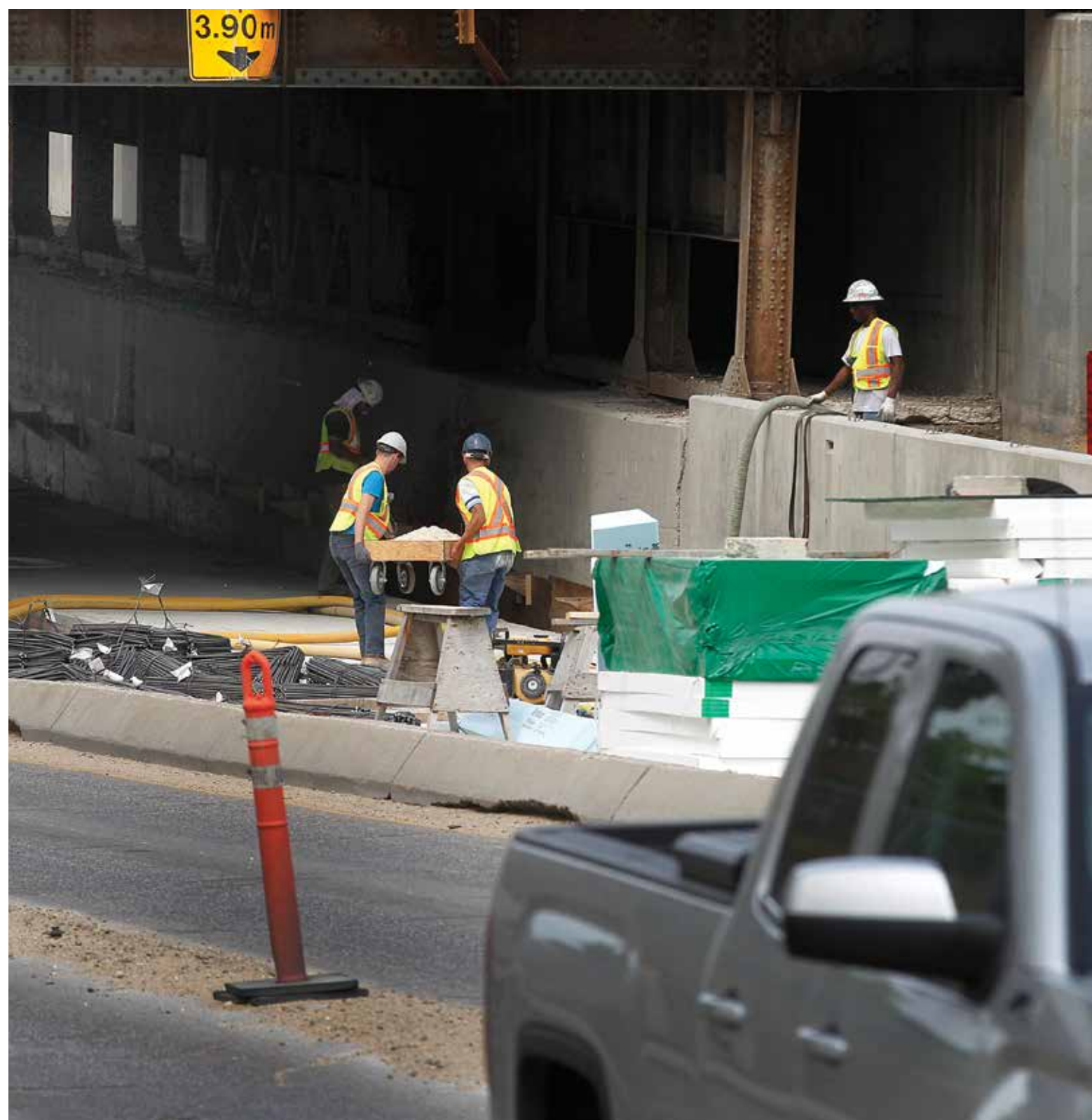




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Reconstruction work
underway in the
McPhillips Street
underpass this summer.
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"The Manitoba Construction Sector Council (MCSC) has a portable office trailer that houses a **Sandvik and an Epiroc Blast Hole Drilling Simulator**. These simulators may be shipped anywhere across western Canada where training is required.

MCSC has a blast hole drilling course developed by industry for industry that was developed in partnership with Austin Powder, Hugh Munro Construction and Epiroc. We have a certified Indigenous blaster/driller to deliver training on site.

MCSC wants to train 35 Indigenous drillers by June 2020. We will seek federal funding to support delivery of the drilling program with company partners.

For more information please contact:

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WELCOME TO COUNCIL; HERE'S WHY INFRASTRUCTURE IS TAXPAYERS' NO. 1 PRIORITY

Every new city councillor gets a crash course in civic governance, from the how's and why's of city hall, to the ethical code for public office holders. But, a newbie's education starts long before the name plate goes up on the door. It began at the constituents' doorsteps, on the campaign. That's where taxpayers, face to face, outline their concerns, and repeatedly Winnipeg's streets top the list.

Portage and Main got a lot of attention during the election campaign, but it's not the prime infrastructure concern of taxpayers. And, like Portage and Main, infrastructure is more complicated than what appears on the surface. Fixing those potholes, a metaphor for crumbling infrastructure, demands a deeper look at what ails our roads, back lanes, sewer and water network and bridges — our core infrastructure.

Settle in, councillors: here's a core infrastructure primer to ensure you're ready for the budget debates just weeks away.

#1 THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE:

As with the Portage and Main debate, solutions are not superficial. Patching potholes, or making a quick fix of a broken sewer pipe, just puts off the real work.

All of our infrastructure assets have a "best-before" date. Ensuring the full life-cycle is taken up is why good, timely repairs are central to the local and regional street renewal program. A life-cycle approach makes sure people and business move safely and efficiently on our streets — that's our economy in motion, daily. The economic imperative is why property owners pay 2% increases to their municipal taxes each year, raising \$11 million in revenues specifically to boost the city's contributions to the Local & Regional Street Renewal budget line, annually.

#2 PLANNING IS CRITICAL, FINANCIALLY AND LOGISTICALLY:

We must plan to invest, otherwise it's like throwing money at a problem. What's the problem? Beyond potholed roads — again, the 'deeper' issue — is the fact that Winnipeg has not been so good at asset management. Past years of inadequate maintenance in our streets, roads and sewer and water pipes meant things began to crumble. We're playing an expensive game of catch-up now. The infrastructure investment deficit — the gap between what is and what must be budgeted to bring our core infrastructure to good condition — is \$3.8 billion, over the next decade.

Like any investment, we need a strategy to look after our infrastructure. The strategy is in the way we forecast sufficient budgets to meet the need (see above: deficit) and ensure we get the biggest return for our dollar. Then, the city needs to award contracts

to construction companies early enough to make the most of a short season — that's called 'procurement' and it depends on planning projects ahead, internally, so they can be pulled off the shelf when council approves annual budgets, or the program runs a surplus.

#3 KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL:

Back to the 2% dedicated annual tax hike for local and regional streets. The city set, in 2013 and 2014, a special levy for streets because Winnipeg's infrastructure was crumbling, and there was no good plan to address it. Council approved the tax hit, predicated on a strategy outlined at the time to resolve the infrastructure gap by 2022.

As noted by the recent 2018 State of the Infrastructure Report, we have a lot of work to do yet. The city streets, in particular, got a C+ grade for condition. City councils in the past didn't always stick to the plan. Despite revenue increases of \$10 million+ from the dedicated tax, there were years when there was no increase to the local and regional streets program.

Now we're hearing that Winnipeg's done enough, that increases to date have been sufficient and other priorities, such as community centres and recreation facilities, should move ahead of streets.

We have been here before. When city council feels current investment is 'good enough,' the infrastructure gap widens. Deficit becomes a huge hole.

The original policy plan said sustainability required an investment of \$80 million annually by 2022 for local streets, and \$60 million for regional roads. This year, the city invested \$60 million and \$56 million, respectively. And while the recent federal government commit of \$100 million over the next five years for regional roads is progress, it has an expiry date. How will Winnipeg hit its 2022 targets for the total program? What is the plan for the following five or 20 years?

#4 KEEP THE PROMISE

Any aspiring councillor knows that taxpayers' No. 1 concern is our streets. Each of Winnipeg's councillors, in a questionnaire returned to the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association prior to Oct. 24, said infrastructure is among their priorities, too. Some said it wasn't No. 1; we respect that.

But, if city council decides current infrastructure budgets are good enough, we will quickly dig ourselves into a deep, dark hole. More like a sinkhole, than a pothole.

We have a plan — backed by \$11 million in new city revenue dedicated for local and regional streets. Stay with the plan, keep the promise. Ensure council approves \$11 million more from the city's own-source contributions for streets, every year. 🍀