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Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario aims to make infrastructure a provincial election issue

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The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) has unleashed ads promoting the critical need for ongoing infrastructure investment ahead of the fall provincial election.

Andy Manahan, RCCAO executive director, said the association thought it had to take measures to get infrastructure on the upcoming election agenda.

“Although the [10-year plan came out at the end of June](#) and talked about \$35 billion to be spent in the next three years, we haven’t really seen a lot explicitly stated about infrastructure as a platform.”

Since its founding in 2005, the RCCAO has been a strong advocate for infrastructure and has commissioned and promoted independent research related to planning, financing and building infrastructure, removing regulatory impediments, evaluating the risks and benefits of infrastructure investment and improving government procurement practices.



Andy Manahan

Prior to the 2007 election, RCCAO teamed up with Labourers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 183, the Greater Toronto Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association (GTSWCA) and the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) to form the Infrastructure Investment Coalition (IIC), a temporary organization to raise awareness about these same issues.

The IIC issued a report on Ontario bridges in late 2007.

For this upcoming election, Manahan would have liked to have seen a debate on infrastructure after the 10-year plan was released with current Minister of Infrastructure Bob Chiarelli and two critics, but that did not happen. These ads are the association’s way of making sure infrastructure still gets some of the spotlight this fall.

■ [VIDEO: Ontario Infrastructure Minister Bob Chiarelli](#)

“We just want to ensure that somehow we can get infrastructure being debated a little bit more. It is just a way to keep this issue front and centre.”

The ad highlights the fact that infrastructure spending often goes through boom and bust cycles of political attention as it shifts to other priorities.

“To maintain and expand high-quality infrastructure, we need two things: a

commitment to steady, long-term infrastructure spending; and incorporation of business principles like asset management planning, scheduled maintenance/reinvestment and full cost pricing into public infrastructure programs,” it says.

Manahan has also sent the ad to all of the sitting MPPs, even those who have said they are not running again and the candidates.

“It’s certainly important for new candidates to be made aware of our organization and the industry and how important infrastructure is,” he said.

In terms of infrastructure, Manahan wants to highlight that these ads are targeting transportation — roads and transit and water and sewer.

“There’s obviously lots of other important infrastructure like hospitals, but that’s not what we define as being core. Libraries are probably important as well, schools are important, but it’s not the infrastructure that’s required to open up new development,” he said.