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Toronto Board of Trade blog presses mayoral candidates on infrastructure vision

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What long-term vision do Toronto's mayoral candidates have on issues from sewers to transit? The Toronto Board of Trade would like to know and has turned to a construction industry stakeholder to [blog](#) about it to find out.

"We already have heard a lot about transit but what about roads, water and sewer?" said Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO).

"The board of trade's efforts are to be commended. This is a way to use technology to engage people and hopefully it will result in the candidates thinking about issues they may not have yet."

Manahan will be a guest blogger this week on the board of trade's Toronto municipal election website www.votetoronto2010.com. The election takes place Oct. 25.

Manahan is also a member of the board of trade's infrastructure committee and he said that the goal is the same in trying to engage the candidates, whether he is representing RCCAO, the board of trade or both.

"We want to ensure the important issues are aired."

The five pressing RCCAO questions Manahan has for the candidates, which he included in his blog post, are:

- What is your plan with respect to road, transit, sewer and water infrastructure?
- What funding mechanisms would be best to ensure that infrastructure is built and maintained?
- Are there different governance models that would work more effectively to build and maintain infrastructure?
- How would you ensure that Toronto works productively with Queen's Park and Ottawa to ensure that Toronto gets its fair share of infrastructure funding?
- Are there changes you would make to procurement/tendering processes to ensure that Torontonians get better value for money and that more infrastructure can be built with limited dollars?

Manahan also highlighted his association's recent public infrastructure underinvestment report by RiskAnalytica that concluded infrastructure underinvestment over the next 50 years could cost the Canadian economy 1.1 per cent of real GDP growth.

"One could reasonably assume that the current level of underinvestment could have equally dire consequences for Toronto's regional economy," blogged Manahan. "Other studies assessing congestion in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, for example, have suggested that the economic costs are at least \$3 billion per year."

Manahan said that though the leading candidates in Toronto's mayoralty campaign have addressed transit from subway expansion over light, street-level rail and some have debated alternate financing (whether pro or con on road tolls; monetizing assets such as Toronto Hydro) none have put forward a long term infrastructure building vision for the city.