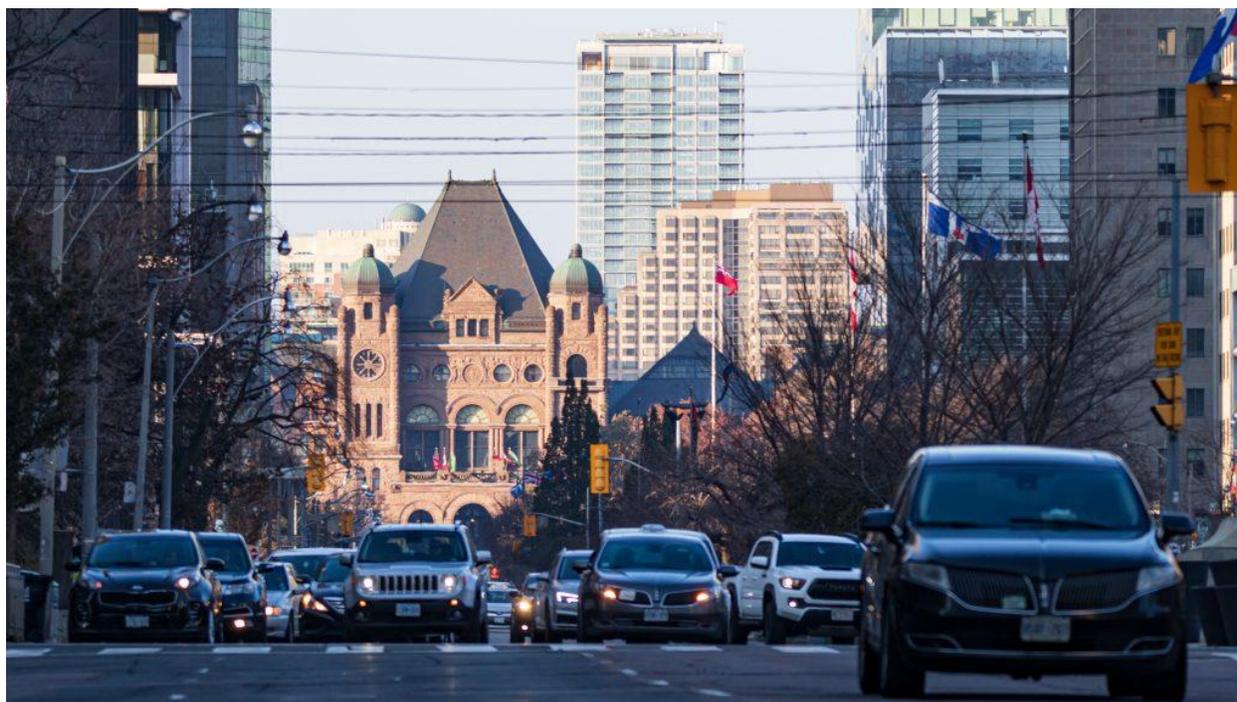


Unsolicited infrastructure proposal framework will deliver: Industry

Angela Gismondi December 18, 2019



The Ontario government has launched the province's first unsolicited infrastructure proposals framework and industry stakeholders say the program will open the door for the private sector to bring forward innovative infrastructure ideas.

Unsolicited proposals (USP) are defined as proposals to the government that were not requested through an existing procurement. The program is open to all infrastructure proposals including transit lines and stations, highways, health care facilities, housing supply projects, energy generation and storage projects; and digital infrastructure such as broadband and cellular communications networks.

“From our perspective, this is a game changer potentially with respect to how we deliver certain types of infrastructure,” said **Andy Manahan, executive director, Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)**.

“The province is sending out a very strong signal that it is open to more innovative approaches to building infrastructure which is something we've been advocating for a long time. In one of the Michael Fenn (former Ontario deputy minister) reports (commissioned by RCCAO) he mentions the way to have more innovation and more cost effective delivery of projects is to allow the

private sector to come forward with proposals that were not necessarily in the governments books but might fit with the governments mandate of building more infrastructure.”

Any individual, business or organization can submit a proposal through an unsolicited proposals intake form online.

There are no limitations on the project size, asset class, deliver model or type of proposal, a release indicates.

I’m positive that industry will respond with some truly cutting-edge proposals

— **Mark Romoff**

Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships

“An unsolicited proposal framework is a leading global practice to leverage the expertise of the private sector to develop innovative infrastructure solutions to benefit the people of Ontario,” said Minister of Infrastructure Laurie Scott, in a statement.

“We must acknowledge that government doesn’t always have all the answers. Our new USP framework will ensure we are listening to the people and businesses that build and operate infrastructure in Ontario to find the best ideas and make them a reality.”

The process involves three stages. The initial proposal will provide high-level information about the proposal to be evaluated. If the proposal is selected to move to the second stage of evaluation, a detailed proposal will need to be provided, requiring a detailed business case and possibly meetings to discuss the proposal.

If the proposal is selected to move to the third stage, the government will design a transaction and procurement structure that is best suited to delivering the project while protecting the public interest.

Although there is no fee to submit a proposal, the applicant is expected to cover costs as it progresses through the various stages of the process.

“This is an exciting development and it’s great to see Ontario continuing to lead the way in new, innovative approaches to developing public infrastructure,” said Mark Romoff, president and CEO of the Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships, in an email to the Daily Commercial News.

“I’m positive that industry will respond with some truly cutting-edge proposals, further strengthening its partnership with government that has served Ontarians so well.”

Submissions will be assessed on a number of criteria including if it’s a genuine unsolicited proposal that does not constitute a response to an existing, pending or announced request for proposals under any government procurement; demonstrates clear value or benefit for the people

of Ontario; relates to the development or improvement of an infrastructure asset; aligns with government priorities; has commercial, financial and technical viability; and if government funding is required, the proposal must demonstrate a clear value for money with respect to the government's investment.

Manahan pointed out engineering and contractor sectors are involved with infrastructure projects around the world and have ideas for incorporating more innovative approaches which are not typically generated through traditional procurement processes, especially those that are more prescriptive.

“The more you have that level of specification in a contract, the more difficult it is generally to come up with innovative ways of doing things because they are telling you each and every step of the way what has to be done,” said Manahan.