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CDAO moving toward a formal body

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The new chair of the Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario (CDAO) hopes to see the organization become a formal body moving forward.

New CDAO chair Clive Thurston, president of the [Ontario General Contractors Association](#) (OGCA), alluded to a confidential proposal currently in the works that will be the next step for the organization. Members are currently discussing the proposal with their various boards and directors and members will be coming back to the CDAO at its next meeting at the end of March.

“Basically in broad strokes, the alliance has been working as a loose, non-registered (entity)...we’ve recognized there are certain risks and things that have come about because of our success and on the advice of legal people and others we talked to, we felt we had to look at taking some new steps to reorganize the alliance into a more formal body,” he said.

Thurston is hopeful the proposal will be approved and then the CDAO will hold a strategic planning session and begin laying out its goals for the coming years.

Thurston succeeds Joe Accardi, executive director of the [Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association](#). Kristi Doyle, executive director of the [Ontario Association of Architects](#) (OAA), will be the alliance’s vice-chair.

The CDAO grew from an advisory committee for former infrastructure minister David Caplan. The alliance was specifically founded to deal with the issues of infrastructure and maintaining the long-term infrastructure investment plan.

Among its successes, the CDAO was instrumental in getting the local knowledge requirement in Infrastructure Ontario’s request for qualifications (RFQ) documents. It also set up project bundling protocols and was instrumental in a number of the proposals in the province’s 10-year infrastructure plan.

Thurston said one of the main priorities of the CDAO is highlighting the importance of maintaining the 10-year plan to newly appointed infrastructure and transportation minister Glen Murray.

“The 10-year plan is a couple of years old. It’s time to take another look at it and keep it moving forward so it’s always at least 10 years out.”

The alliance is also focusing on a broader public sector procurement directive “which is causing a great deal of havoc and confusion throughout the industry, mostly for owners who are having trouble getting straight answers on how to interpret it. We’re heavily involved in that too and we continue to work on that front,” he said.

Thurston said the strength of the CDAO is that its members support each other on a number of different issues and that everyone has a voice.

“The system we set up allows for the CDAO to move forward with a position but it also respects the position of those that disagree. Minority opinion is always included in our reports,” he said.

“We may not always agree with each other, we don’t work on consensus, we work on getting things done.”

It makes a difference that the CDAO has everyone under one roof — all of the design and engineering sector, homebuilders, the highrise sector, sewer and watermain, he said.

“There’s nothing that is designed, engineered or built that isn’t done by one of our members. When you can bring those people together to speak with a single voice, people listen and you get things done,” said Thurston.

It is also important to Thurston that each member directly represents direct employers of people in the industry.

He said incorporating local construction associations has been discussed, though the CDAO is currently focused on other issues and it has not become a priority. The CDAO has also not been approached by any local construction associations.

“We have to figure out exactly who we are; we thought we knew who we were.”

The CDAO has launched a website, cdao.ca, which Thurston sees as growing to incorporate reports from the **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario**, best practices bulletins from the OGCA, OAA and others.