

GTA in Brief

Faster EAs mean more jobs

The **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario** is pressing the provincial government to streamline the environmental assessment process ahead of the upcoming budget. While the province continues to push for job growth, the RCCAO is arguing that streamlining the EA process for basic infrastructure projects would get construction off the ground quicker, resulting in an estimated 10,000-construction jobs this year. An RCCAO study estimates the current EA process delays municipal infrastructure projects by 20 months on average.

The alliance wants the province to foster greater co-operation with the federal government to eliminate the need for federal EAs beyond

provincial ones; eliminate required studies of alternatives when the review and public scrutiny has already been undertaken through the planning act process and municipal capital budget debates; eliminate unnecessary formal government review requests; and create a municipal class EA regulation that would fast track basic infrastructure projects, much like the streamlined transit EA process.

“We’re talking about making the approvals process simpler and faster for projects that are add ons and improvements, projects such as road extensions and widenings, bridge replacements and alterations or expansions of sewer and water systems,” RCCAO executive director **Andy Manahan** said in a press release issued yesterday.