

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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What makes a mayor construction-friendly?

VINCE VERSACE

staff writer



What is the necessary vision and the intangibles a construction-friendly mayor in Toronto needs to have? "That mayor would be someone who recognizes that we have to deal with infrastructure expansion and aging infrastructure," said Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.

"They would be a mayor who puts in place systems and models that will result in a more predictable construction schedule. This would help with tendering and procurement and certainty for contractors and workers in our industry in terms of getting the job done."

Voters will be heading to ballot boxes across Ontario today to cast votes for local mayor and councillor candidates.

Manahan has had a unique vantage point during the Toronto municipal campaign thanks to his blogger role with the Toronto Board of Trade.

He blogged about infrastructure issues in the city, asking candidates a handful of questions meant to enlighten both Toronto citizens and the construction industry.

Ultimately, whether the voter wears a hard hat or not, one intangible holds true in choosing a candidate: faith in that candidate's vision.

"You have to consider the personality of the candidate and whether you believe that person can deliver on their vision," said Manahan.

"If someone comes into office and starts to do a line-by-line breakdown of the books, which certainly is important, will they be successful in talking to the province or federal government in getting more money? Who do you think will be more forceful in doing that?"

Which candidate gets endorsed by construction groups is as varied as the industry itself.

The Merit OpenShop Contractors Association of Ontario (MOCAO) has endorsed Rob Ford for mayor in the Toronto race. MOCAO cited Ford's promise for open tendering as a prime reason for their support.

Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers has endorsed George Smitherman for Toronto mayor, citing his infrastructure plan and support of the city's fair wage policy.

"Any mayor that has a good vision of Toronto is one that has a vision to accommodate growth in a pragmatic and efficient way," believes Manahan. "They are a mayor that recognizes that to get development done in the city it takes a lot of red tape.

"It is still a complex exercise to get your applications through Toronto's process, though there have been

positive changes over the years.”

Toronto’s next mayor needs to recognize that certain services mandated by the provincial government can handcuff a municipality financially, and this requires flexibility in their approach.

“You need someone that is pragmatic,” Manahan said. “Who will be the person who says, ‘I promised you this, I don’t think I can deliver, but here is another way of getting around the problem’?”