

DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

September 16, 2009

Infrastructure

Toronto lands \$200 million stimulus

VINCE VERSACE - staff writer

Ottawa's \$200 million contribution in infrastructure stimulus funding for Toronto will help get work started on over 500 citywide construction projects valued at nearly \$600 million.

The funding is expected to preserve or create close to 7,000 jobs in the city and the federal portion is drawn from Ottawa's \$4 billion infrastructure stimulus fund. Toronto submitted its construction project wish list late after a failed bid by the city to secure a third of the \$1.2 billion price tag to replace its aging streetcar fleet.

"Mayor (David) Miller did take a bit of a risky strategy putting all his eggs in one basket," said Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario. "Thankfully the federal government did allow Toronto to get in their application though the deadline had passed. It could have been zero. Hopefully this kind of work will get underway as soon as possible."

The stimulus funding is available for two years for projects that will be built by spring 2011. Ottawa is providing approximately \$190 million towards the projects and Toronto's share is approximately \$387 million. Some critics claim the almost \$200 million in federal cash is insufficient and that the government is now in the "pothole business".

"Various municipalities came forward with their priorities and with such a large infrastructure deficit right now, you could make the argument that pretty well everything is a priority," said Manahan. "Based on the program funding constraints, municipalities had to face some tough decisions to get the funding to get going on these projects."

Emergency repair of the Coxwell sanitary system is the largest ticket item on Toronto's stimulus project list at a cost of \$40 million. RCCAO said this project "is an extreme priority." Toronto water projects carry an expected \$170.6 million value and range from downtown lead water service replacement to watermain replacement throughout the city.

Transit improvements for the Toronto Transit Commission carry a \$183 million value for its assorted projects such as \$22.7 million for the redevelopment of Victoria Park Station, \$22.4 million for station modernizations to Pape and Dufferin stations and \$22.1 million for elevators. Phase one redevelopment of Warden subway station is expected to cost \$12 million. On-grade paving and roofing rehabilitation of TTC properties has a projected cost of \$23.6 million.

Thirty-seven million dollars for a Regent Park Cultural Centre is the second largest project item on Toronto's project list. Ottawa's portion is \$12 million. Construction of new police stations at 11 and 14 divisions is pegged at \$55.1 million.

Toronto's various stimulus road projects are valued at \$91.7 million, ranging from road resurfacing and reconstruction to bridge rehabilitation, laneways and cycling infrastructure. The top resurfacing projects are Steeles Avenue at \$15 million and Victoria Park at \$9 million.