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Ontario General Contractors Association

OGCA urges Infrastructure Ontario to “meet its full mandate”

PATRICIA WILLIAMS

staff writer

Infrastructure Ontario needs to expand its expand its horizons and undertake projects outside of the healthcare sphere, says Ontario General Contractors Association president (OGCA) Clive Thurston.

“Recent efforts have focused mainly on the health sector, hospitals in particular,” he told the provincial government’s standing committee on government agencies. “Nevertheless, infrastructure is more than just hospitals or buildings.

“What good are such structures if we cannot depend on the roads and bridges to reach them? “How can they operate if the water and wastewater treatment systems break down or cannot handle new expansions?”

“It is clear that the same efforts that have been made to bring the hospital sector up must be applied to highways, roads, bridges and water and wastewater systems.”

Thurston, who was speaking on behalf of five other provincial trade associations, said the time has come for Infrastructure Ontario to “expand and meet its full mandate” of delivering major infrastructure projects for the provincial government.

He said the Crown corporation should engage organizations such as the Ontario Road Builders’ Association (ORBA), the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association (OSWCA) and the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.

“Infrastructure Ontario needs to focus on three main building blocks — roads, sewer and watermain projects and hospitals.”

Thurston, who made a joint presentation with Ottawa Construction Association chair Mike

Sharp, briefed the committee on other items of concern to the province's design and construction industry.

These include: potential bundling of projects; the need for an "open and transparent" system of financial accountability; and support for "new and better" ways of procuring consultant services such as qualifications-based selection.

Thurston said projects also need to be planned and rolled out in concert with the industry "to ensure a realistic setting of schedules and budgets and provide for effective management of resources."

Prior to the presentation, Thurston contacted the Ontario Association of Architects and Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) for input in addition to ORBA, OSWCA and the RCCAO.

CEO president John Gamble who attended the meeting, said it was "unfortunate" that other industry stakeholders had not been invited to appear before the committee, which is reviewing IO operations.

"They are the actual implementers of Infrastructure Ontario's vision and have a lot to contribute," he said.