



**Pre-Budget Submission**

to the

**House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance**

by the

**Canadian Public Works Association**

**July 2016**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CPWA was founded in 1986 as the national voice of the Canadian public works community from coast to coast to coast. Our public works professionals from both the public and private sectors plan and manage roads and bridges, drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, city parks and buildings, traffic signals and lighting systems, stormwater, snow removal, sanitation, and mass public transit services. Our members ensure that our communities are sustainable, safe and healthy places to live, work, play and invest.

The Government of Canada is investing considerable funds to refurbish and to build new public infrastructure across the country. CPWA believes that with this opportunity comes an obligation to ensure that new infrastructure investments are built to endure and are managed effectively. Our recommendations focus on asset management, climate change mitigation and on building sustainable infrastructure for communities across Canada.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. Asset Management**

The single-most important issue to consider and plan for when significant sums are being invested in public infrastructure is proper asset management. A critical component of asset management is ensuring that municipalities receive the training and technical support needed to build capacity in the management of public infrastructure assets. The CPWA was pleased that Budget 2016 proposed a new \$50 million capacity building fund. Given the importance of municipal capacity building, we recommend that additional funding be provided that is long-term and predictable.

#### **2. Climate Change Mitigation**

CPWA members are an essential part of first responders teams when natural disasters hit cities and towns across the country, an increasingly important role as Canada experiences more frequent extreme weather events. We were pleased that Budget 2016 announced \$75 million in new funding to help local governments address climate change and committed to investing in adaptation and climate resilient infrastructure. The CPWA recommends that additional funding be provided that is long-term and predictable.

#### **3. Sustainable Infrastructure**

The federal government has a role to play in ensuring that public funds are directed towards public infrastructure projects that have been planned and executed in accordance with sustainability principles. CPWA recommends that the government consider supporting the use of a sustainability rating system such as Envision® which provides municipalities with a holistic framework for evaluating and rating the community, environmental and economic benefits of all types and sizes of infrastructure projects.

As stewards of our nation's community infrastructure assets, the CPWA is pleased to make these recommendations to the Committee during its pre-budget consultation process and will be available for additional consultation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Canadian Public Works Association (“CPWA”) is pleased to present its views to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance (“Committee”) regarding Canada’s economic and fiscal policies in response to the Committee’s request for input from Canadian individuals and organizations. The Committee’s pre-budget consultations are an important instrument of public outreach and offer us an opportunity to engage in the key policy debates that affect the lives and livelihood of Canadians. The CPWA believes it has a responsibility to contribute to the dialogue on these important public policy issues and we are pleased to participate.

The Committee requested that written submissions address some or all of three questions as set out in the Committee’s news release dated June 3, 2016. This submission focuses on Question #3, relating specifically to investments in public infrastructure and communities.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The CPWA was founded in 1986 as the national voice of the Canadian public works community from coast to coast to coast. Working in tandem with the American Public Works Association (APWA), the CPWA represents over 29,000 public works professionals in North America working on both sides of the border to innovate and assure excellence in the public works profession.

Our public works professionals from both the public and private sectors plan and manage roads and bridges, water and wastewater treatment facilities, traffic signals and lighting systems, parks and city buildings, snow removal, sanitation, and mass public transit services representing the backbone of Canadian communities that are sustainable, safe and healthy places to live, work, play and invest.

The CPWA provides a forum for public works professionals to exchange information, develop ideas and share skills, knowledge and technologies on issues that are unique to Canada. Over 2,200 Canadian members participate in eight Canadian Chapters, covering all ten provinces and three territories.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Government of Canada is investing considerable funds to refurbish and to build new public infrastructure across the country. The CPWA believes that with this opportunity comes an obligation to ensure that Canada’s new infrastructure investments are built to endure and are managed effectively. Our recommendations, therefore, focus on asset management, climate change mitigation and sustainable infrastructure for urban, rural and remote communities across the country.

### **1. Asset Management**

The single-most important issue to consider and plan for when significant sums are being invested in public infrastructure is proper asset management. Extending the useful life of major infrastructure assets by insisting upon proper asset management tools and measures respects the prudent expenditure of public funds and keeps community infrastructure safer longer. While this may be particularly true of new projects, asset management is also vitally important when it comes to the ongoing maintenance of existing public infrastructure.

A critical component of asset management is ensuring that municipalities receive the training and technical support needed to build capacity in the management of public infrastructure assets. The CPWA was pleased, therefore, to see that Budget 2016 proposed a new \$50 million capacity building fund to support best practices across the country. Given the importance of municipal capacity building, we recommend that additional funding be provided that is long-term and predictable.

## **2. Climate Change Mitigation**

CPWA members are an essential part of first responders teams when natural disasters hit cities and towns across the country, working to ensure that vital services are maintained and/or restored as quickly as possible. This has become an increasingly important role for our members as Canada experiences more frequent extreme weather events.

We were pleased that Budget 2016 announced \$75 million in new funding to help local governments address climate change, including assessing climate risks and integrating them into asset management plans. Budget 2016 also noted the government's commitment to investing in adaptation and climate resilient infrastructure. As is the case with building capacity for asset management in municipalities across Canada, the CPWA recommends that additional funding be provided that is long-term and predictable.

## **3. Sustainability for Infrastructure**

There is a strong and compelling indication that civil engineering infrastructure projects are falling behind the societal and functional expectations of what is needed both for today and into the future. The principles of sustainable development are considered to be fundamental to how civil engineers and the public can more successfully address the return on investment in infrastructure and meet today's critical societal needs. These concerns led to three major U.S.-based associations – the APWA, the American Council of Engineering Companies, and the American Society of Civil Engineers – to launch a new not-for-profit organization dedicated to sustainable infrastructure, the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI).

Working jointly with the Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, ISI developed the sustainability rating tool Envision®. This tool provides a holistic framework for evaluating and rating the community, environmental and economic benefits of all types and sizes of infrastructure projects including roads, bridges, pipelines, railways, airports, dams, levees, solid waste landfills, water supplies, wastewater treatment plants, power transmission lines, telecommunications towers and public spaces in our cities, towns and local communities. Envision® evaluates, grades, and gives recognition to infrastructure projects that use transformational, collaborative approaches to assess the sustainability indicators over the course of a project's life cycle. (For further information please see: <http://www.sustainableinfrastructure.org/rating/index.cfm>)

ISI and Envision® have earned a reputation as the leader in rating sustainability for infrastructure in both the public and private realm in both Canada and the US. The first recognized wastewater treatment project in Canada, the Grand Bend Area Wastewater Treatment Facility, was verified and awarded the Envision® Platinum award in March 2015. The first recognized transportation project, Port Metro Vancouver's Low Level Road, was verified and awarded the Envision®

Platinum award in September 2015. Envision® is also currently in use in the planning of other Canadian projects. Recent updates to the Envision® guidance manual and on-line training program include newly-added Canadian references which will streamline the tool's use on Canadian projects and assist in training and certifying professionals with the Envision® Sustainability Professional (ENV SP) credential (there are currently 4,500 ENV SPs, with over 100 ENV SPs working in Canada).

We believe that the federal government has a role to play in ensuring that the investment of public funds is directed towards public infrastructure projects that have been planned and executed in accordance with sustainability principles. Accordingly, the CPWA recommends that the Government of Canada consider supporting the use of sustainability rating systems such as the Envision® sustainability rating tool which provides municipalities with a holistic framework for evaluating and rating the community, environmental and economic benefits of all types and sizes of infrastructure projects.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Government of Canada is embarking, along with its provincial/territorial and municipal partners, upon a series of significant investments in much-needed infrastructure in communities across Canada. These investments will help to ensure prosperous and safe communities and contribute to Canada's economic growth in the years ahead. We believe that the Government of Canada should seize the opportunity to build in accountability measures that demonstrate prudent management of public finances and promote safe and sustainable communities.

The CPWA recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Provide additional, long-term and predictable funding for building asset management capacity in municipalities across Canada.
2. Invest additional funds in climate change mitigation and in building climate resilient infrastructure in a consistent, long-term and predictable manner.
3. Consider supporting the use of a sustainability rating tool such as Envision® which provides municipalities with a holistic framework for evaluating and rating the community, environmental and economic benefits of all types and sizes of infrastructure projects.

As stewards of our nation's community infrastructure assets, the CPWA is pleased to make these recommendations to the Committee during its pre-budget consultation process and will be available for additional consultation.