

Provincial budget is good news for construction industry: RCCAO, ACEC, PCA

By [Robin MacLennan, Editor, Ontario Construction News](#) - March 28, 2024

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[The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario \(RCCAO\)](#) says Tuesday's provincial budget is a win for Ontario's construction industry.

Budget 2024, *Building a Better Ontario*, is a plan to build critical infrastructure, recognizing that, building and maintaining critical infrastructure like roads, housing, transit, water and wastewater capacity is key to ensuring the province will continue to have a strong economy and high quality of life.

RCCAO also supports the Government of Ontario's renewed commitment to building transformational transportation infrastructure projects, including Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass. Earlier this month, [polling commissioned by RCCAO](#) and the Ontario Road Builders Association (ORBA) revealed that a clear majority of Ontarians support the construction and expansion of new road infrastructure, with 2:1 expressing support for Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass.

"The investments in critical infrastructure in Budget 2024 are a reflection of the priorities of the people of Ontario," said Nadia Todorova, Executive Director of RCCAO. "Ontarians recognize that highways, water infrastructure capacity and housing are crucial to tackle some of the province's biggest challenges and we are pleased that the Ontario government has answered their calls to build."

The government's \$3 billion allocation to this fund has the potential to get more projects built by leveraging public infrastructure dollars to attract additional institutional capital, she said, a positive step toward ensuring the necessary foundation for a prosperous and competitive future.

Building on the \$860 million already committed, Todorova said she is also pleased to see an additional \$100 million investment in the Skills Development Fund Training Stream to assist with the recruitment, training, and retention of a new generation of builders.

“Transformational infrastructure projects like Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass are critical to the province’s economy and quality of life, while investments in housing-enabling infrastructure make the development of thriving communities possible,” said Peter Smith, executive director, [Heavy Construction Association of Toronto \(HCAT\)](#). “The realization of this vision ensures that Ontario is prepared to grow in a sustainable and resilient manner for the benefit of current and future residents.”

The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) applauded the focus on Northern Ontario’s critical mineral strategy, major infrastructure and skills training in Budget 2024.

The budget also confirms the government’s commitment to building a strong critical minerals sector in Northern Ontario’s Ring of Fire by investing in exploration, and supporting infrastructure in the north, such as all-season roads.

“As Ontario enters tighter fiscal conditions, it is encouraging that the government continues to invest in new infrastructure and skills training,” said Karen Renkema, VP Ontario at PCA. “These are the kinds of investments that make a difference to our communities, our members and so many Ontario workers.”

Also, new investments in energy procurement are needed, according to a recent report by the Independent Energy System Operator (IESO) found that Ontario will need to invest \$400 billion by 2050 to meet future energy demand.

“Given the size and importance of this investment, it’s a shame that our contractors and their workers are shut out of building and maintaining much of Ontario’s energy infrastructure,” added Renkema. “It’s time that changed, so that ratepayers, workers and contractors are treated fairly.”

Budget 2024 projects a deficit of \$9.8 billion, which delays the province’s plan to balance the budget to 2026/27.

In its [pre-budget submission](#), ACEC-Ontario identified a series of recommendations that would enable the government to:

- Deliver more projects on-time and on-budget;
- Reduce repair costs and keep the economy moving forward;
- Ensure a strong, diverse workforce capable of meeting challenges; and,
- Protect the public interest.

The provincial budget incorporates several of these recommendations, including \$3.9 billion for projects to expand and repair provincial highways and bridges; a one-time \$100 million investment to assist with STEM program costs at publicly assisted colleges and universities; and, 15 new projects to help integrate hydrogen into the province's electricity grid.

"Indeed, these projects are an intrinsic aspect to the well-being of communities across the province. Typically unnoticed by the public, the behind-the-scenes work of consulting engineers ensures that nearly everything in the built surroundings of our communities functions properly," stated Hurd. "The safe water that flows seemingly effortlessly through our taps, the roads, bridges and transit that move our communities, the parks we play in, and the hospitals that keep us healthy."