



We've seen an infrastructure boom in the past 15 years since our first issue. What have been the industry's biggest accomplishments?

FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

Industry leaders share their insight on the industry's greatest successes.

Fifteen years has passed since the first edition of ReNew Canada landed at the Canadian Brownfields conference on October 5, 2005. Few industries have gone through the amount of change, and significance of investment, than the public sector infrastructure industry in Canada.

We reached out to industry stakeholders across the country for their thoughts on the biggest changes, or most important developments, in the industry over the past 15 years. Here is what they had to say.



"The last 15 years have seen growing appreciation of the essential way that transportation infrastructure knits us together. Important everywhere, but especially in a country as large and diverse as Canada, transportation is critical to connect us, facilitate our mobility and enable our economy. We've also made great strides in understanding the linkage between transportation and the health of our citizens, our communities, and our climate. Investing in transportation infrastructure and effectively managing those valuable public sector assets helps Canada and Canadians be healthy, safe, and prosperous."

Sarah Wells, Executive Director, Transportation Association of Canada



"One of the greatest impacts on Canadian infrastructure over the last 15 years has been the size and scope of capital investment by successive governments at the federal and provincial levels. Combine that with sustained private investment and you can see the transformation of infrastructure across Canada. We're seeing it across traditional, social and green infrastructure projects. The true benefit can only be realized if we continue to invest over the next 15 years. Some argue that infrastructure investment should increase even more in the future. Our industry—and most Canadians—would certainly welcome that development."

Mark Dvorak, President and COO, EXP



"We didn't have the iPhone fifteen years ago, much less drones tracking site progress and communicating

via 5G networks in real time. Despite improvements in technology, gains in productivity have evolved slower. We've witnessed megaprojects become larger and increasingly complex with more multi-disciplinary partners, yet the industry is still challenged to appropriately allocate risk. The trend we can all focus on is collaboration. We can listen closer to our clients and communities, better understand their needs and strengthen partnerships, attract and develop a more diverse group of employees with the right capabilities and foster cultures of collaboration. This will surely yield a more successful tomorrow."

Anthony Karakatsanis,
President and CEO, Morrison Hershfield



"P3's initial success in Canada has been overshadowed by recent delivery issues and finger-pointing regarding

underlying causes. Early P3s belied a comfort with traditional procurement, meaning prescriptive specifications and lowest price wins. Some owners and contractors have been slow to embrace the "partnership" aspect, believing risk-transfer meant disappearance of risks. To realize P3's promise, new approaches are being considered: greater design flexibility for bidders AND greater owner involvement in evaluation of design; greater public role in risk management (proactively through legislation and reactively through stakeholder coordination) AND greater transparency by bidders in how they will manage risks. The challenge will best be met by openness about expectations, as in a true partnership."

Patrick Dolan, Counsel, BLG



"Technology has evolved to enable us to not only plan, design, build and manage assets in different ways, but also

allow us to manage large amounts of data used for fiscally accountable and transparent decision-making. Growing social responsibility and stewardship for the environment underpins our client work, which is firmly grounded on science through the application of technological advancements. These shifts in our industry, along with growing economies and increasing population, is driving the public sector to have an accelerated appetite for change. Not only in the way day-to-day business is managed, but also in the new and creative ways we are delivering public sector projects."

Chris Hunter, Regional General Manager, Ontario, GHD



"Municipalities across Canada are facing a cash crunch due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so it is worthwhile to heed Todd's

words in the "In Debt We Trust" piece in the September/October 2012 edition where he commented on the bankruptcy of Stockton, California that summer and asked whether this could happen in Canada. At that time there were two Canadian cities that had more long-term debt than annual revenue. Todd Latham's sage and prescient advice is well worth following today where the fiscal landscape for many municipalities is precarious and highly dependent on the largesse of senior orders of government: "Provide a more equitable distribution of provincial and federal tax revenues to the cities that earn them, and give municipalities the increased powers and autonomy they need to best manage their assets and their liabilities." The lesson for today: while infrastructure stimulus funding and other programs from Ottawa are welcome, bold action is needed now on how to implement structural changes to our governments' fiscal relationships.

Andy Manahan, Executive Director, Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)



"The delivery of P3 projects can be adversely impacted if risks are inappropriately assigned or improperly

managed. Truly effective risk management requires a strategy that can accommodate the uncertainty and variety of risks exposed from the cradle to the grave of a project, regardless of size or procurement method. The vast majority of risks/claims on infrastructure projects tend to occur in the following eight areas: utilities, geotechnical, contamination, permits/approvals, bundled projects, scope changes, property, and construction interfaces. The risk tolerance in these eight areas has substantially changed in the past decade. Owners must accept that the market's appetite for risk tolerance is evolving to reflect past cost and schedule risks. These of which has now materialized into real-life project challenges, and Owners' approach to procurement, design and construction contracts needs to evolve to ensure a competitive response to bids in the future."

Elie Dagher, Vice President – Engineering and Project Management, Comtech



"Over the years, we've seen significant change, and we've changed alongside it. The digital transformation has changed the way

we tackle transformative opportunities. The focus is on nimble data-driven decision-making and digital solutions to ensure dependable execution. We enjoy opportunities to partner with governments to shape sustainable growth and drive social, economic, and environmental progress. But our industry needs to share risk better. Through collaborative partnerships and alliances, we are seeing this change unfold. Recently, in responding to COVID-19, this approach has led to new concepts to help governments accelerate shovel-ready infrastructure investments as the world invests to reboot economies."

Ian Edwards, President and CEO, SNC-Lavalin

