



TRIP / CANADA STRATEGIC OPERATIONS PLAN 2003 - 2005

Introduction

In 1982 the Canadian Construction Association (CCA) formed a special committee called "The Road Information Program of Canada." Its name was expanded in 1998 to "The Road & Infrastructure Program of Canada" (TRIP/Canada) in recognition of a broader mandate.

In 2003 it was agreed that in order to avoid undue confusion, "TRIP Canada" would become a sub-committee of the CCA Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Council. The "TRIP Canada" label would be used for internal purposes to separate the Council's infrastructure program lobbying functions from other activities.

Externally positions of the Council would be presented under the Canadian Construction Association (CCA) name.

Infrastructure Focus

For the purposes of TRIP/Canada's activities, a preferred definition of "infrastructure" is limited to a focus upon roads, highways, streets, sidewalks, lanes, bridges and structures, water distribution systems and treatment plants, waste water, sewage collection and treatment, and urban transit systems.

Strategic Plan

TRIP/Canada last adopted a strategic plan in 2000. At the TRIP/Canada Strategic Planning meeting held May 31, 2003, it was decided that a review of the Plan be undertaken internally, and considered at the next meeting of the CCA Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Council. Given the fluid political situation, including the upcoming Liberal leadership convention, a possible Throne Speech, and a possible election in 2004, this plan will be subject to ongoing revision. *The purpose of a strategic operations plan is to identify measurable steps intended to advance the mission and objectives.*

Vision

The vision statement of TRIP Canada should read as follows:

To achieve an adequately funded and sustainable transportation and core municipal infrastructure program for Canada.

Mission

The mission is the organization's key challenge. The TRIP/Canada mission in the immediate future is as follows:

To persuade the federal, provincial and municipal governments that long term, enhanced, and sustainable funding strategies are necessary to address the national highways system and core municipal infrastructure investment deficits, in order that appropriate levels of public safety and economic productivity be achieved; and

To persuade Canadians that a well maintained infrastructure is essential to Canada's economic prosperity, thereby providing governments the necessary revenues with which to maintain and enhance for public benefit, healthcare, education and social safety net programs.

Strategic Operations Plan – Elements

Government/Public Relations

The mission identifies two streams of communications activities – government, general public and stakeholder organizations.

Government Relations

The objective of the government relations strategy is to:

- *persuade the federal, provincial and municipal governments that long term enhanced funding strategies are necessary to address the estimated \$57 billion core municipal infrastructure and \$19 billion national highways system investment deficits, in order that appropriate levels of public safety and economic productivity efficiency be achieved.*

Government relations targets elected officials and the non-elected bureaucracy. Each must be approached in a fashion that recognizes the respective political and administrative agendas. TRIP/Canada's immediate government relations strategy should focus upon the following objectives:

1. Following the commitment made by Liberal leadership frontrunner Paul Martin to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to allocate a portion of federal road use fuel taxes towards core municipal infrastructure and transportation upon becoming Prime Minister, make frequent contacts with the Paul Martin leadership team, and key officials in a future Paul Martin government, to ensure that this commitment becomes a reality. This would include meeting with supportive Members of Parliament (eg, Stan Keyes, Joe Comuzzi), who may be part of a Paul Martin Cabinet.

Time frame: Ongoing

2. Host a fundraising event for Paul Martin in the fall of 2003 to signal the appreciation of the industry for this commitment, and to provide industry representatives with a chance to speak directly to Mr. Martin about his plans on how to implement a dedicated fuel tax proposal.

Time frame – September 2003

3. Organize a multistakeholder forum whereby key stakeholders can be brought together for a day in order to discuss the policy issues and questions surrounding a dedicated fuel tax proposal. Invitees should include the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Liberal Highway Caucus and other stakeholders, members of Paul Martin's campaign team, the Transportation Association of Canada, the Canadian Trucking Alliance, provincial representatives, the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association, the Canadian Automobile Association, and so forth.

The ultimate goal of such a session would be to prepare a report outlining the views of the assembled stakeholders on how a dedicated fuel tax proposal could be implemented.

Time frame – Fall 2003 (before November 20, 2003)

4. Following the completion of this process, circulate the views of the industry to provincial premiers and big-city Mayors caucus and the FCM so as to keep the momentum alive on this proposal, and to ensure that the provinces and municipalities are ready to commit to the principles outlined in such a policy document.

Time frame: Fall 2003 – Winter 2004

5. Jeff Morrison will attend the Liberal Leadership convention in Toronto in November to press key MPs and potential Paul Martin Cabinet Ministers to embrace the dedicated fuel tax idea, and to share the outcome of the multistakeholder policy session. This may also present an opportunity to garner media exposure of TRIP and our issues. Follow-up contacts with MPs should be made following the convention. *Time frame – ongoing.*

6. All of the above will need to take place before a Paul Martin government comes into office. Once a Martin government takes power, TRIP will need to orient its activities depending on the measures taken by Prime Minister Martin.

If he intends to unveil a Speech from the Throne, TRIP will need to discuss with officials in the PMO the contents of such a speech. If he intends to call a snap election, TRIP will need to meet with representatives from the various parties to ensure that a dedicated fuel tax notion is included in all the parties' electoral platforms. If he intends on unveiling a budget, we will need to lobby the new Minister of Finance to ensure that dedicated fuel taxes be included in that budget.

Time frame: Ongoing, dependant on external factors

7. Maintaining a presence on the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Board of Directors should continue to be a priority, in order that contacts available to federal and provincial ministers, their respective deputies and other key transportation stakeholders are cultivated to advantage.

Time frame: ongoing

1.2 General Public

The second area of communications is with the general public. We must increase the level of public awareness and sense of urgency related to support for sustained government investment in infrastructure. The objective here is:

To persuade Canadians that a well maintained infrastructure is essential to Canada's economic prosperity, thereby providing governments the necessary revenues with which to maintain and enhance for public benefit, healthcare, education and social safety net programs.

The Council has identified positively influencing public opinion as a key campaign target. Undoubtedly, favorable public opinion is key to ensuring that decision makers act on highway and core municipal infrastructure investment. However, the question is not whether favorable public opinion should be sought, but how it can be achieved.

There are a number of avenues that TRIP can pursue to achieve greater levels of public support for increased highway and municipal infrastructure investment.

1. Participate in the Transportation Awareness Partnership (TAP) campaign: TAP is a coalition that was created for the explicit purpose of raising awareness of the importance of transportation amongst Canadians. It is currently in the midst of defining its vision and a strategic plan to achieve this vision. TRIP Canada will participate in the TAP process by taking part in planning meetings and offering views on its policy direction. Once a final strategy is developed, the Roadbuilders Council will make a determination as to whether to participate more fully, including possibly budgetary allocation.

2. TRIP/Canada Public Awareness Campaign: Depending on the outcome of the TAP process, TRIP Canada can look into the possibility of conducting its own public awareness campaign using its own resources to hire an external consultant. This process may be more expensive, but would have the advantage of allowing TRIP to focus the message strictly on highway and infrastructure investment.

3. Ongoing Public Awareness Opportunities: The Roadbuilders Council, and in particular, the Executive Director, must always look for opportunities to garner additional media exposure. This could come in the form of op-ed pieces, strategic news releases, letters to the editor, proactively contacting reporters, etc. In addition, any communication coming from CCA should be shared with the Roadbuilders Council members in the hopes that they will also circulate communications material to their local media outlets.

1.3 Stakeholder Associations

The use of national, provincial, regional and local stakeholder associations to broaden “Canadian” support and therefore credibility of message, *must* be a high priority. The organization of a multistakeholder symposium on fuel tax allocation is one example of how CCA could partner with stakeholder associations, but other opportunities may present themselves down the road.

At the May 2003 Strategic Planning session, the idea of reinvigorating the Coalition to Renew Canada's Infrastructure (CRCI) was discussed, but a decision as to whether this should be accomplished was put off until a better sense of the political environment was made. As such, although the strengthening of CRCI as a body to coordinate stakeholder activity should be considered, given limited resources, it should be pursued only if a determination is made that it would be useful to TRIP's lobbying functions.

time frame: ongoing

1.4 Internal Communications

Internally, TRIP/Canada should develop an appropriate communication strategy incorporating the following elements:

- i) a one to two page communication piece with accompanying circulation strategy, for distribution on a quarterly basis to the Roadbuilder & Heavy Construction Council, and placed in CCA's quarterly mailing;
- ii) such publication should summarize TRIP/Canada's lobby activities, articulate the theme or stream of messages being pursued, offer engaging or thought provoking opinion, and/or comment on the status of its efforts;
- iii) it should be circulated for widespread use in general association publications and elsewhere;
- iv) such publication, along with other timely releases, should support TRIP/Canada's ongoing lobby activities and strategies.

time frame: ongoing

Research and Data Collection

In the 1980's the TRIP reports gained much attention across Canada with wide distribution. Reaching the academic community, municipalities, and provincial governments, the TRIP reports laid the groundwork for many subsequent lobbying efforts. These reports should be updated and used as part of the overall strategy. To the extent possible they should be updated jointly with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC).

Time frame: Ongoing

Governance

TRIP/Canada operations should continue to be open and accessible with an updated governance structure to reflect the following elements:

1. A CCA staff officer assigned to TRIP/Canada, to continue to be known as the Executive Director;
2. A Steering Committee of the CCA Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Council who will be responsible for providing ongoing direction on the activities of the lobbying functions, and who would report directly to the CCA Roadbuilders Council;
3. The Executive Director communicating directly and regularly with chief staff persons of provincial road builder and heavy construction associations and utilizing their strengths to assist in the overall lobby efforts;
4. TRIP/Canada continuing to support the goals and objectives of the CCA.

Budget

Unless otherwise determined, TRIP/Canada should continue operating within the existing budget as adopted at the last Roadbuilders Council meeting.

Conclusion

Commitment to a strategic plan, modified as circumstances dictate, is crucial to the success of TRIP/Canada's activities on behalf of the construction industry. At minimum, the plan should:

i) be reviewed bi-annually with an assessment of accomplishments, and otherwise adjusted as may be required, at the TRIP/Canada meetings convened during the CCA Annual Convention and fall meetings; and

ii) any activity updates or proposed strategic plan revisions should be circulated to participants in writing at least four weeks in advance of any such meeting(s).

Adopted by the RBC on September 21, 2003 in Edmonton, Alberta.

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