



TRIP/Canada

The Road & Infrastructure Program of Canada
"A Special Committee of the Canadian Construction Association"



STRATEGIC OPERATIONS PLAN '2000/2001

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.

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 and sewage collection and treatment.

Strategic Plan

TRIP/Canada last adopted a strategic plan in 1998. At the TRIP/Canada meeting held March 1, 2000, it was decided that a review of the Plan be undertaken internally, and considered at the May, 2000 TRIP/Canada meetings. Because of political nature of these efforts, a possible federal election and therefore exposure to "shifting positions", the time frame for the within plan is June 1, 2000 to February 28, 2001, incorporating ongoing reviews thereafter. *The purpose of a strategic operations plan is to identify measurable steps intended to advance the mission and objectives.*

Mission

The mission is the organization's key challenge. The TRIP/Canada mission in the immediate future should in general terms, be as follows:

** to persuade the federal, provincial and municipal governments that long term enhanced funding strategies are necessary to address the estimated \$17.5 billion national highways system and \$44 billion 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.*

Objectives

The mission objectives are to secure sustained infrastructure investment policies, namely:

- a.) a *National Transportation Investment Strategy (NTIS)* focussing upon a National Highways Program (NHP) with annual 50/50 cost-shared investments to address national highways system improvements;
- b.) a *National Infrastructure Program (NIP)* with proposed annual tri-government level cost-shared investments to rehabilitate core municipal infrastructure;
- c.) a *Strategic Infrastructure Investments (SII)* to create new areas of economic activity funded as a component of each of the first two programs.

It is an objective that funding for the program areas facilitate where appropriate private sector participation.

Strategic Operations Plan - Elements

1.0 Government/Public Relations

The mission identifies two streams of communications activities - government and general public. The general public can be further defined to mean the general Canadian public and stakeholder organizations.

1.1 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 \$44 billion core municipal infrastructure, and \$17.5 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. Identify and approach individuals in the private sector, elected officials and bureaucrats, particularly with a political policy development strength, who are close to and respected by the Hon. Paul Martin, Minister of Finance. We must determine what will motivate Minister Martin as Finance Minister/politician to support a long-term financial commitment to infrastructure renewal;

time frame: ongoing to July 30, 2000

2. Based upon the results of #1 above, develop an appropriate message and delivery strategy. It may be that as a result of these efforts, the name(s) of a respected lobbyist will emerge whose services might be warranted. If so, that should be considered at the time;

time frame: July 1, to October 31, 2000

3. Premiers and key Mayors should be approached for the purposes of soliciting support for emerging policy consensus and input into any position to be articulated by industry. It is critical that any message(s) advocated does not offend to the extent possible, provincial political agendas. Infrastructure investment must be supported at the August 2000 Annual Premiers Conference. Municipal support is obviously desirable.

time frame: August 1, to November 30, 2000

4. No meeting with Minister Martin should be pursued until #1, #2 & #3 have been completed. Any meeting should be preceded with visits to key confidants, to ensure required degree of message sophistication and astuteness. A premature meeting can result in harm and a reluctance to treat our policy concerns seriously. Assuming a meeting is arranged, key and strategically selected "impact" private sector persons must be present.

5. Following the meetings with Minister Martin, a full scale lobby effort pursuing the infrastructure policy should then be undertaken utilizing the support, assistance and participation not only of the CCA community, but as many stakeholders as possible, whether national, regional, provincial or local.

time frame: October 1, to January 31, 2001

6. It is vital that TRIP/Canada carefully and selectively builds long-term, mutually respectful relationships with key ministers, MPs and bureaucrats in Ottawa. Insight gained from such

relationships helps hone our “political knowledge” and therefore assists in developing appropriate strategies supportive of our objectives.

time frame: ongoing

7. Maintaining a presence on the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Board of Directors should 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

8. Influencing all of the above for the period 2000 - 2001, is a probable federal election. If there is, we must in advance have exercised our best efforts to ensure to the extent possible, that urban and transportation infrastructure is raised either as front and center, or is supportive (a sub-set) of a key priority election platform and therefore placed before the public eye. Accordingly appropriate linkages should be forged with all federal political parties to determine the best manner to ensure that infrastructure is a key election platform or a critical sub-set of one.

An immediate meeting to assess and implement a strategy may be required in the event an election is called for the fall of 2000.

time frame: ongoing

9. Given a shift to a higher PMO role in shaping platform leading up to an election, find an effective internal champion with insider clout to influence policy development whether from within or outside the PMO, Finance Department and/or caucus.

time frame: June to October, 2000

10. Engage credible research firm to determine what message represents the *best fit* with the public.

time frame: August 20 - October 20, 2000

11. Identify projects in large Canadian cities that have the potential for becoming major national stories and assess whether investing in urban/transportation infrastructure is the vehicle to success.

time frame: June - October, 2000

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:

** 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 public's backing for infrastructure investment may be as important if not more so, than political support - witness the impact of the public's healthcare opinion. The message offered the general public should be coordinated, endorse the themes laid out in the messages struck as a result of efforts in #1.1 above, and follow a clearly defined strategy utilizing as many delivery agents as possible. If a major public relations campaign is ultimately deemed necessary or desirable, it will have major budget implication, which would have to be part of the discussion.

time frame: ongoing and implemented progressively

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. Our concern should be less for the purity of message, than for the net impact of a number of organizations and the constituencies they represent, speaking publicly in support of infrastructure investment. The current National Transportation & Infrastructure Policy (NTIP) brief is evidence that this is possible.

It would be ideal if a coalition affiliated under an association name could re-emerge. Given the existing name recognition and credibility of the Coalition to Renew Canada’s Infrastructure (CRCI), every effort should be made to reconstitute CRCI as an effective organization bringing together national associations and corporations prepared to become actively involved in lobbying for infrastructure investment. If necessary, TRIP/Canada/CCA should provide administrative support. CRCI’s past history and efforts leading up to the 1998 Ottawa Stakeholder Conference demonstrate that this is possible.

time frame: June 1 to August 1, 2000

1.4 Message Delivery - Media

External

Media coverage affects elected and bureaucratic perceptions of policy importance. Accordingly, every opportunity to access media should be utilized on a sustained basis using a variety of messengers. TRIP/Canada should communicate across Canada more frequently and on a sustained basis, with different media outlets by way of media releases and other forms of communication, even if some of it is “ghost written” for other parties to submit.

time frame: ongoing and implemented strategically

Internal

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 monthly and/or quarterly basis to the TRIP/Canada and Roadbuilder & Heavy Construction Council;
- 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: June 1 to December 30, 2000

Governance

TRIP/Canada operations should continue to be open and accessible reflecting the following elements:

1. A CCA staff officer assigned to TRIP/Canada, to be known as the Executive Director;
2. A TRIP/Canada Management Committee reporting on TRIP/Canada activities at each meeting of the CCA Roadbuilder & Heavy Construction Council and the CCA Board of Directors;
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 1999 TRIP/Canada meetings in Halifax.

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 with an assessment of accomplishments and short-comings, and adjusted as may be required, at the TRIP/Canada meetings convened during the CCA Annual Convention, the spring 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 May 28, 2000 at the CCA Roadbuilder & Heavy Construction Council meeting held in Regina, Saskatchewan.