

# Tender packages for 2024 released

Construction companies can start putting offers together for provincial infrastructure projects



By: [Martin Cash](#) Posted: 2:03 AM CST Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023

Wab Kinew continues to make the rounds as the province's new premier to ensure business groups in the province that he and his new government are committed to feeding the economic horse that pulls the social cart.

On Friday, it was a speech to the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, a powerful organization in the province that builds and maintains the physical infrastructure.

Among other things, the MHCA has done much of the advocacy work that has made infrastructure spending such a key item when it comes to the perception of Manitoba's relative competitiveness.

At the MHCA's annual meeting at the RBC Convention Centre on Friday, Chris Lorenc, the organization's president and CEO noted that trade generates 53 per cent of the provincial GDP supporting 240,000 jobs in the province, directly and indirectly.

Kinew emphasized his government would be all about predictability and stability.

To that end, the premier announced that next year's tender packages for all provincial highways, bridges and other infrastructure construction was to be released yesterday.

The announcement was met with applause from the MHCA members.

The release of that schedule in such a timely manner is "hugely important," Lorenc said.

He noted his members are always a little nervous when there is a change of government.

"We impressed on minister (Lisa) Naylor (the new minister of transportation and infrastructure) that we needed the tender schedule out. They have done a great job and it will be released today," Lorenc said.

Having the schedule out now allows companies to better organize their affairs, he said.

"It could have been delayed, which would make us less productive and less competitive. The more information and the earlier we have it, the more competitive we are and the lower the prices are.

"The program budget benefits by that."

Kinew reiterated his support to help complete construction of Chief Peguis Trail and the widening of Kenaston Boulevard, and an overall commitment to the importance of such investments.

“What I can say is that the message of predictability and stability over a multi-year timeline will be maintained when it comes to the envelop for infrastructure investment here in Manitoba,” he said.

Lorenc said those projects will ultimately need federal funding support, but he said Kinew’s government has “committed to tendering and awarding no less than \$500 million, which is a big step forward.”

It’s likely reassuring to the group, as well, because any new government finds surprises hidden in department operations they might not have expected.

Kinew made a point of reminding the MHCA that his government has committed to the fiscal framework within the existing 2023 budget.

“The framework around taxes and other economic incentives will not be disrupted. It won’t be recalibrated because of a change in government,” he said.

But Kinew did say there are fiscal realities that are going to have to be revisited.

“We are going to have to make some serious decisions to be able to deliver on one of our core election commitments, which is to balance the budget within our first term,” he said.

But it was hardly a dire warning from Kinew, whose speech was full of hopeful optimism that Lorenc and others seem to accept at face value.

“It is genuinely believable that there is good reason for optimism for the future of this province and the economy, and by extension the role this province can play in the country,” said Lorenc.

To that end, Kinew reiterated his commitment to the Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan, a long-term co-ordination and planning of investments in roads, rail, airport and marine assets and trade corridors across the country that all provinces support.

Perrin Beatty, the president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, who also spoke at the MHCA breakfast, emphasized the importance of such a national co-ordination of trade infrastructure.

“Canada’s standing in the world as a reliable trading partner has taken a hit,” he said. “We have fallen from the top 10 in 2009 to 32nd in the World Economic Forum’s global ranking of quality of transportation infrastructure and it has probably fallen further since.”

That puts Canada’s ranking below developing countries such as Azerbaijan and Malaysia, and former Eastern European communist countries such as Poland, Hungary and Czechia.

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