MASSONRY WORKS

MASSONRY MOVING FORWARD

Embracing The New Norm
This year the world has been presented with a multitude of generation defining challenges which in turn, has forced us to reconsider and change the ways that we do business. By now, three months into a global pandemic, many of us have realized the potential of telecommuting and we have also come to appreciate the value that comes with personal interactions and meetings. While the challenges of 2020 have been difficult for everyone, it has also allowed many to take a step back and reflect on the type of world we want to live in after the global pandemic is over. Although 2020 has presented us with new challenges, it doesn’t mean that the very important issues we faced before have been solved. Climate change is still a very real threat to the long-term viability of our society and as many of us take a step back to consider how we can be better citizens and correct the vulnerabilities both in Canada and globally, an opportunity presents itself. The consequences of COVID-19 have led to broader discussions on how we can rebuild the economy in a way that considers all of the challenges we face including climate change, equity imbalance within the economy and the preparation for future pandemics. We now have the opportunity to hit the proverbial reset button to build a more sustainable, just and compassionate society.

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In Ontario, all levels of government are in the initial stages of planning for a COVID-19 recovery. The economic impacts of the pandemic have been significant and there is no doubt that the economy will require major stimulus. All levels of government will likely come together to fund infrastructure projects with the intention of stimulating the economy which now presents government with an opportunity to build infrastructure with the intention of addressing a number of challenges that Canada and Ontario face. This includes the building of sustainable and resilient infrastructure which provides long term value in regards to tax dollars spent and in relation to potential climate change impact. As jurisdictions across Canada look to the federal government for help in the economic recovery, the federal government has indicated that it realizes the opportunity which has presented itself to develop an infrastructure network which addresses climate change. Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna has therefore stated that the government is looking to achieve the most value for dollars spent and will consider “shovel worthy projects” over simply “shovel ready projects”. The Federal Government intends to apply an equity lens to the recovery, which means strong consideration will be given to the impacts, or lack thereof on minority and under-represented cohorts of the population. This lens will be applied to three priority areas of infrastructure funding: public transit, green infrastructure and access to high speed internet. Given that the Federal Government will be flipping most of the bill for infrastructure funding it is important that provincial jurisdictions such as Ontario, and its subsequent municipalities, assess whether or not their roster of potential infrastructure projects meet the standard of “shovel worthy”.

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