

# Investor Immigration, Failing Infrastructure And That Sink Hole In Ottawa

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The recent emergence of a sink hole in downtown [Ottawa](#) drew national attention to what may be part of an emerging crisis in Ottawa, as well as in other municipalities across Canada, namely the municipal infrastructure deficit. While it is not certain that the Ottawa sink hole was caused by infrastructure neglect, there was at least some [speculation](#) along those lines. That leads me to reiterate what I have said before, namely, that the current municipal infrastructure deficit in Canada is \$ 123 billion and [growing](#). In other words, Canadian roads are crumbling, sewers need repairs and the cost of just maintenance and repair, never mind new infrastructure, will exceed \$ 123 billion. The recently announced federal government plan of spending \$ 120 billion over the next ten years on [infrastructure](#) does not really address this problem. Instead, that program mainly addresses new infrastructure needs spread out over the next decade. The question remains, how is Canada going to pay off its current infrastructure deficit? (Incidentally, if you think this is just a ‘Canadian problem’ consider that it is estimated that the [U.S. infrastructure deficit](#) will hit \$ 3.6 trillion by 2020!) The answer I have proposed for Canada is a new federal investor immigration [program](#).



A large portion of Rideau Street in downtown Ottawa, Ontario is seen caved in, causing a massive sinkhole that knocked out power to the majority of the downtown area on June 8, 2016. The massive sinkhole formed next to a shopping mall in downtown Ottawa, caused

a gas leak and forced the evacuation of all nearby businesses. / AFP / (Chris Roussakis/AFP)

### **A Recent Discussion With The Minister**

Not long ago I was on a Toronto Board of Trade [panel](#) with John McCallum, the current Canadian federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. The subject of infrastructure came up and we exchanged comments about a prospective investor immigration program for that purpose. To be fair, Mr. McCallum pointed out that he does not have a mandate to introduce an investor immigration program for Canada. He was right in that at the beginning of his term he was provided a mandate letter from Prime Minister Trudeau that made no mention of such a [program](#). The closest the Prime Minister's letter came to talking about the municipal infrastructure deficit was in the following passage: "We made a commitment to invest in growing our economy, strengthening the middle class, and helping those working hard to join it ... We committed to public investment as the best way to spur economic growth, job creation, and broad-based prosperity..." There was no specific talk about infrastructure nor of an investor immigration program and more generally it has been clear from their campaign promises that the Liberal Government has committed to using deficit spending to deal with infrastructure and other economic needs.



Canada's Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Minister John McCallum ALICE CHICHE/AFP/Getty Image

Despite this restriction in what he can do, to his credit, the Minister did say that he was open to a discussion about the matter. However, he added, "Canadian citizenship is not for sale." By extension, he implied that Canadian Permanent Residence is also not for

sale – or put another way – the rich should not be able to buy their way into Canada. This is where the discussion ended since we ran out of time at the Board of Trade meeting.

### **Some Questions Remain**

So does that finish the discussion as far as this government is concerned? Doesn't the problem of rising prices in the Canadian housing market recently attributed to foreign buyers taking advantage of education and health care opportunities for their families while avoiding Canadian taxes effectively close off any further debate? Why should Canada introduce a new investor program if the old one was cancelled? Should this all be tabled and included as part of the new national conversation that is proposed for Canadian [immigration](#).