

# REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

November 19, 2014

## Construction & Design

### Build better

Construction task force has big ideas for workers, skyline.

Page B7

THOMAS SCARANGELLO



## TASK FORCE AIM: TO BUILD BETTER

The New York Building Congress, led by its Chairman Thomas Scarangelo, is in the early stages of a wide-ranging initiative designed to foster construction innovation and improve the way New York City builds.

The new Task Force on Innovation and Best Practices draws upon the expertise of more than 50 leading contractors, labor officials, architects, engineers, government officials, and other industry leaders.

With their help, the Building Congress is working to identify, develop, and assist the industry in implementing an ongoing series of innovations that can improve efficiency and reduce the comparatively high cost

of construction in New York City. "The New York Building Congress, with its broad-based membership from all sectors of the building community, can and must serve as a catalyst for productive change," said Scarangelo, who serves as Chairman and CEO of Thornton Tomasetti,

one of the world's pre-eminent engineering firms. "Our mission is to elevate innovation and best practices in a manner that substantially raises the bar while also setting benchmarks that are feasible and attainable."

He added, "To realize a 21st century vision for New York City, we must consistently strive to be at the forefront of building

technology and best practices. In everything from procurement reform and alternative project delivery to virtual modeling, modular construction, and beyond, there is great potential for improving how our City's built environment is designed and constructed.

"Our goal is to replicate what has been proven to work here on a much larger scale, and to identify what is working well elsewhere that can be adapted for use in New York."

The Task Force has been broken into six different working groups focused on building technology and project delivery; government procurement and procedures; work force development; product and process innovations; site

management; and improved communications among all stakeholders.

Each of the working groups has been tasked with researching and reporting on innovations and best practices used in New York City as well as around the world. In addition, each group is expected to recommend those innovations and best practices that can be implemented and expanded here. Some of the Task

Force's immediate priorities include:

- Enacting legislation to allow public-private partnerships and renew design-build authority, both of which encourage innovative financing and management of major infrastructure projects;

- Marshalling the expertise of the industry and assisting Mayor de Blasio in the implementation of his One City Built to Last plan, which proposes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050;

- Researching and educating the industry on the promise of, and challenges associated with, modular construction in New York City;

- Improving the look, feel, and overall safety of construction sheds throughout the five boroughs;

- Collecting data on workforce trends, beginning with a survey of Building Congress member organizations, and developing recommendations to address possible workforce



THOMAS  
SCARANGELLO

demand issues; and

- Promoting better and earlier communication between all design, engineering, and construction entities working on major projects.

"There is no disputing that New York City's place as a premier global city of business, finance, culture, and communications is owed to a large degree on the design, construction, and real estate industry's pioneering spirit and historic ability to shape many of the City's most defining characteristics — including the skyscrapers that dot our magnificent skyline and the extensive subway system, roads, tunnels, bridges, and airports that link New York City to the rest of the region and the world," said Building Congress president Richard T. Anderson.

"At the same time, our industry and the government entities that regulate construction must work harder and more collaboratively to address the weaknesses in our current practices and procedures. "With the construction industry on the verge of another building boom, now is the perfect time to devote our attention to building smarter, better, and more economically."

For more information about the Task Force, including the six working groups and their participants, visit [www.buildingcongress.com](http://www.buildingcongress.com)