

Northern Ontario Transportation Planning

Taking Effective Action to Manage (TEAM) Highway 11 North Working Group – System Planning Office Presentation

October 30, 2023

IPPD
Integrated Policy & Planning Division

Purpose

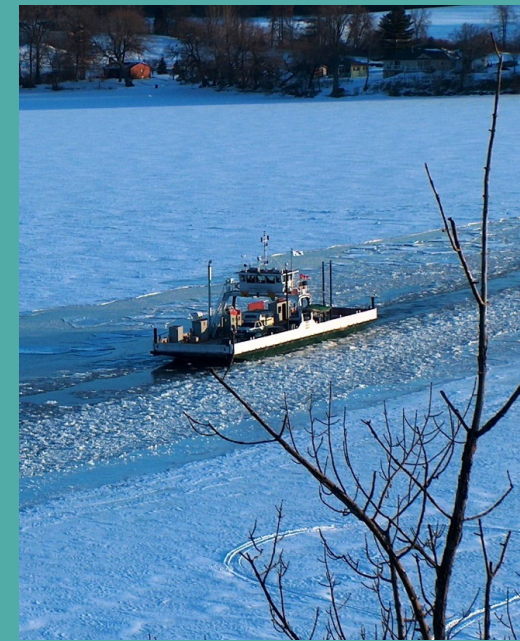
- Provide an overview of the Ministry of Transportation's regional transportation planning process
- Provide an overview of transportation planning for Northern Ontario, including the:
 - Draft 2041 Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy
 - Connecting the North: A Draft Transportation Plan for Northern Ontario
 - Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force
- Highlight actions and initiatives that are relevant to the TEAM Highway 11 North Working Group

MTO'S Regional Transportation Planning

Regional Transportation Planning

Transportation planning is a core activity of MTO, allowing the province to make informed decisions on how to improve the transportation system by:

- **Assessing transportation needs** for all modes of transportation (road, transit, rail, air, marine, as well as active transportation).
- **Looking ahead to future conditions** resulting from changes to technology, demographics, land use, travel preferences, economic conditions, congestion, as well as more severe weather.
- **Identifying where future infrastructure and service connections are needed**, along with supporting policies.
- **Setting out a common vision** to support ongoing collaboration among the many partners involved in the transportation system.



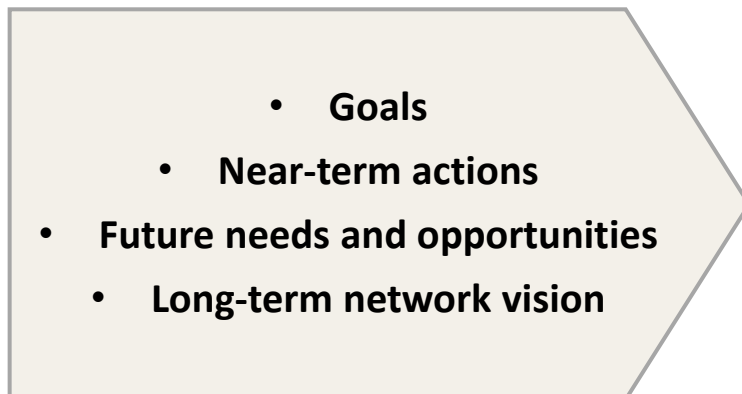
Regional planning within the transportation planning process

Regional transportation plans represent a long-term vision to identify future transportation needs and actions that could be pursued to address those future needs.

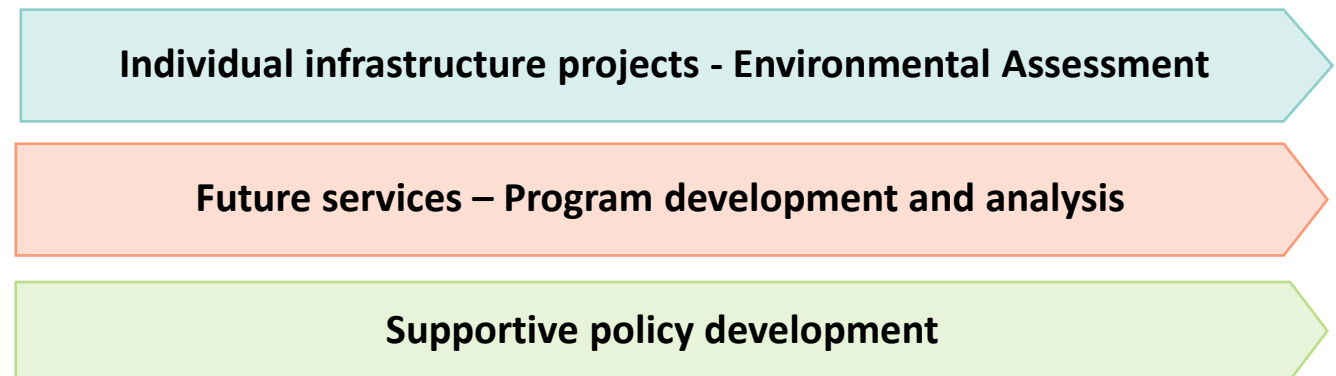
MTO engages with Indigenous communities and organizations, municipalities, transportation partners, and others on regional plans to ensure that their interests, needs and priorities are considered in the early stages of transportation planning and throughout the development and implementation process.

If the ministry decides to pursue the implementation of a specific potential future project, service or policy identified through the regional planning process, project-specific studies and approvals are required, including consultation with specific Indigenous communities whose Aboriginal and treaty rights may be adversely impacted by the potential project.

Region-wide Integrated Planning



Project-specific studies & approvals

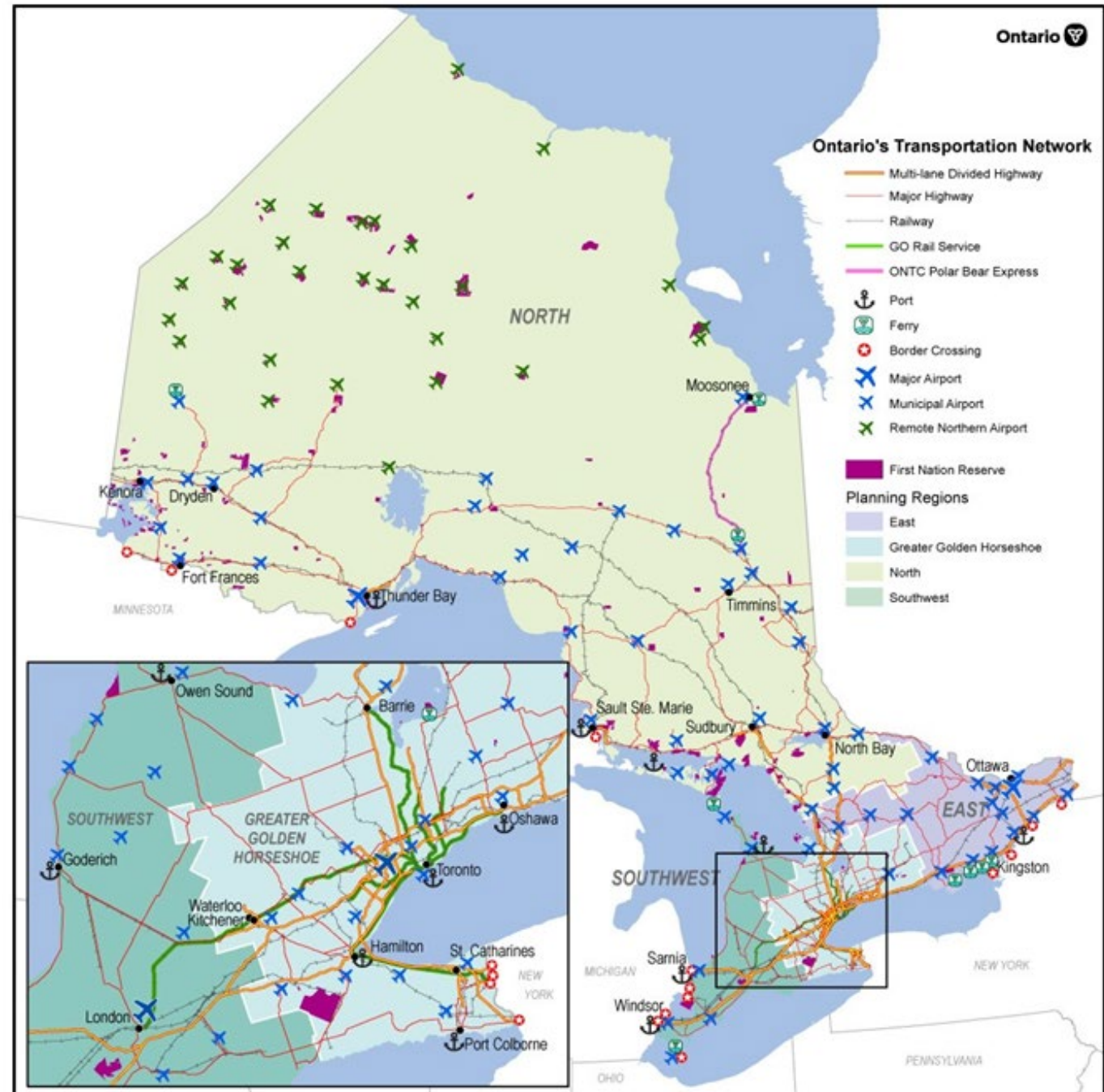


Regional Transportation Plans Across Ontario

Ontario's 2019 Fall Economic Statement committed the province to develop regional plans that will help build a better transportation system to keep goods and people moving across the province.

Transportation planning is carried out on a regional basis to reflect the nature of challenges, needs and opportunities in each region.

Draft plans have now been released for Southwestern, Northern and Eastern Ontario, as well as a final long-range plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.



Technical Planning Studies

In order to develop a long-range plan, MTO undertakes technical planning studies. These multi-year studies involve:

- Assessing the current state of the region and all the different ways people and goods travel to identify what's working well and what the gaps are today
- Travel demand forecasting 20 and 30 years into the future to identify what more will be needed given changes in population, employment, technology, climate, etc.
- Identifying potential infrastructure, service and policy solutions to address current and future needs
- Assessing those solutions in various combinations against the goals for the region to come up with an integrated long-range plan that best achieves those goals

Engagement

Engagement with municipalities, the public, transportation stakeholders, and internal ministry partners takes place at different stages throughout the study.

Engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations also occurs at each stage of the study process, typically including:

- At the beginning of the study, to inform Indigenous communities and organizations of the study, ask how they would like to be engaged, and seek input on **objectives for and existing gaps** in the transportation system.
- At a midpoint in the study to share and seek feedback on the **current and future needs** identified and input on **potential solutions**.
- Later in the study to seek feedback on a **draft long-term vision** for the transportation network.

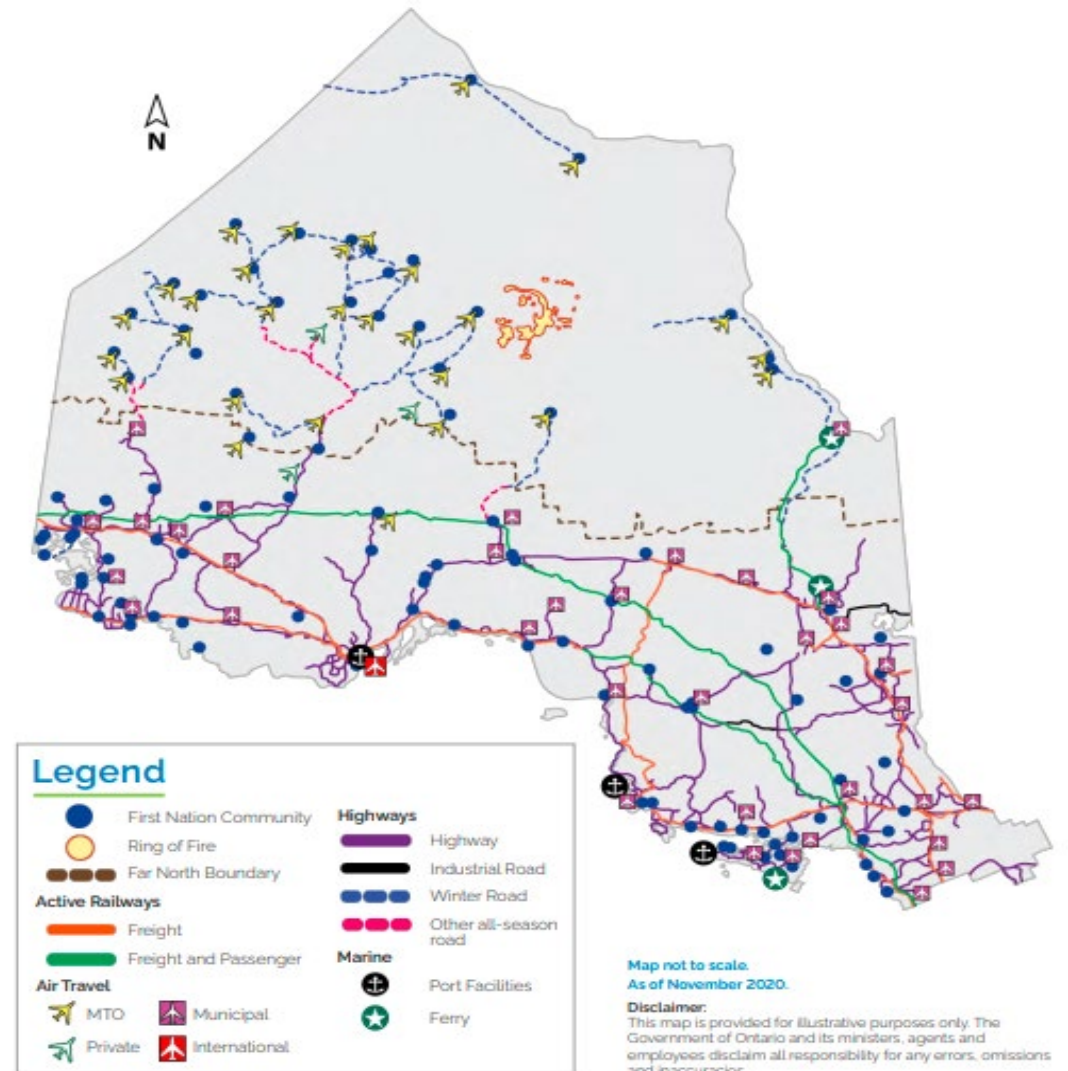
Current Status of Regional Transportation Planning

Plan	Southwestern Ontario	Northern Ontario	Greater Golden Horseshoe	Eastern Ontario
Release Status	Draft plan released in January 2020	Draft plan released in December 2020	Final plan released in March 2022	Draft plan released in April 2022
Actions	Over 40 current and near-term actions	Over 60 current and near-term actions	Over 100 actions; 2051 vision for the region, and future infrastructure, service and policy solutions	Over 50 current and near-term actions
Future transportation networks, services and policies	To be developed in a technical planning study now underway, with a time horizon of 2051	A technical study was completed in July 2017; however, more technical analysis may be needed to develop a long-range plan to 2051	Technical planning completed and incorporated in the plan; additional technical work is needed to deliver on actions included in the plan	To be developed in a technical planning study now underway, with a time horizon of 2051

Northern Ontario Transportation Planning

Overview - Northern Ontario Transportation Planning

- *Connecting the North: A Draft Transportation Plan for Northern Ontario* was released in December 2020 and is one of MTO's four regional transportation plans.
- *Connecting the North* represents the culmination of more than 10 years of planning work on Northern Ontario and was significantly informed by the *Draft 2041 Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy (NOMTS)*, released in July 2017.



Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy (NOMTS)

- The *Draft 2041 Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy* was Ontario's first pan-Northern strategy that considers the integration of multiple transportation modes including road, rail, air, and marine.
- NOMTS was developed to support the implementation of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (2011) and was jointly led by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM).
- The NOMTS initiative remains a signature study of Northern Ontario's transportation system and involved:
 - Technical assessment of needs & opportunities of Northern Ontario's transportation network to 2041, including three context papers on the geography, climate and socio-economic context as well as nine mode-specific technical backgrounders.
 - Extensive engagement with Northern communities, including Indigenous communities and peoples.
 - Alignment with existing government plans/strategies



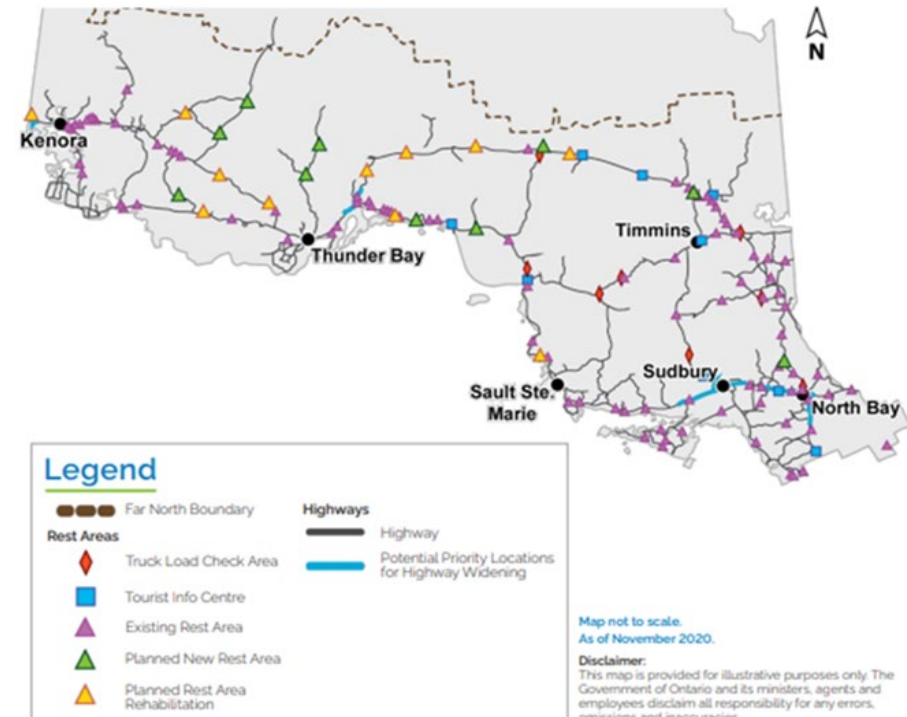
The multimodal technical analysis conducted through NOMTS has informed the development of various programs/projects across MTO and was fundamental in informing the challenges and opportunities, goals, and actions identified in the Draft Northern Transportation Plan

NOMTS – Highways and Roads

- In addition to assessing passenger and commercial vehicle highway capacity to 2041, the Highways and Roads analysis in NOMTS identified highway segments:
 - with significant redundancy issues,
 - where there is a need for new or enhanced rest areas, and
 - that have less than desirable highway geometric design.
- This analysis helped support the development of many actions in *Connecting the North* related to highway infrastructure and operations (e.g., winter maintenance), as well as the identification of potential priority locations for highway widening.
- Specific highway projects identified in *Connecting the North* were drawn largely from projects within the existing project pipeline (e.g. 5-Year Highways Program) or through previously completed road improvement studies.

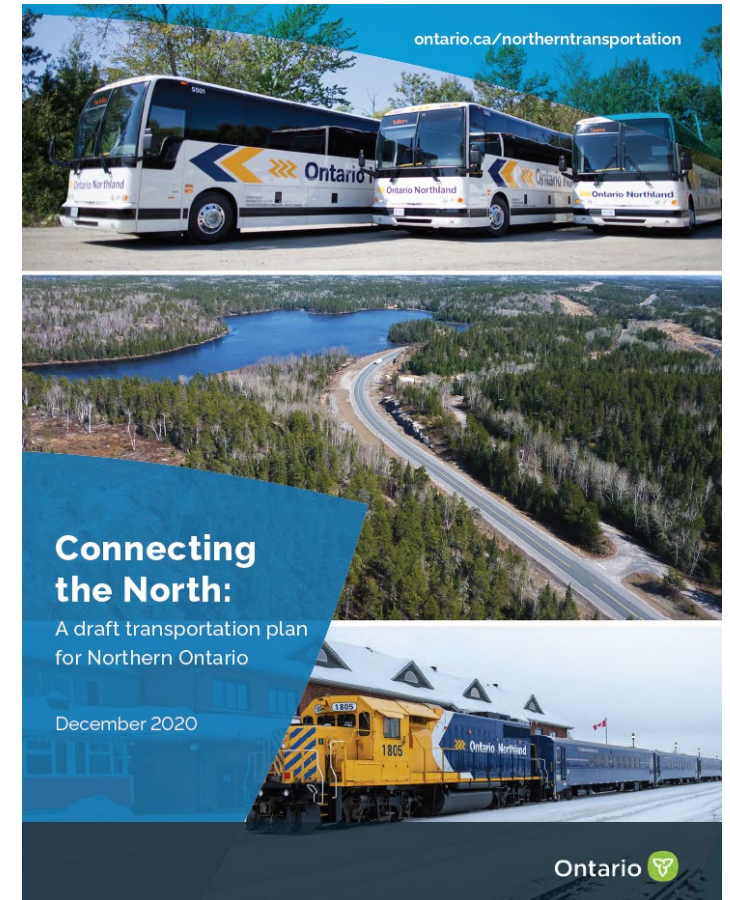


Figure 3: Potential Locations for Highway Reliability and Capacity Improvements



Connecting the North

- *Connecting the North: a draft transportation plan for Northern Ontario* is a multimodal transportation plan which includes **67 actions** to improve Northern Ontario's transportation system.
- The plan was published to provide an overview of transportation planning in the region and includes existing and near-term commitments and approved projects.
- The plan identifies several regional transportation issues, that continue to be of a focus for northern people and communities, businesses, and leaders, including the need for:
 - strong highway corridors and reliable local roads
 - ongoing road maintenance
 - options to increase economic opportunities
 - passenger transportation and reliable intercommunity bus services
 - effective, timely, and safe movement of goods
 - reliable transportation options in the Far North
- The plan is a “living document” that can be reviewed and updated as additional analysis and engagement is conducted, including through initiatives such as the Northern Transportation Task Force.



Connecting the North

- The 67 actions in the plan are intended to address issues identified through NOMTS and other analysis/engagement activities and are organized under **six goals**:

Getting People Moving & Connecting Communities

Including actions to advance highway widening projects, improve intercommunity bus service and continue to make progress on the plan for Northern passenger rail

Enabling Economic Opportunities

Including actions to advance highway rehabilitation projects, support the tourism industry, and support economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples

Keeping People Safe and Providing Reliable Transportation Options

Including actions to raise awareness of human trafficking, and to continue to invest in new, improved and rehabilitated rest areas in the North

Preparing for the Future

Including actions to improve access to broadband and cellular services across Ontario and prepare Northern Ontario's transportation system and infrastructure for the introduction of CV/AVs

Maintaining a Sustainable Transportation System

Including actions to help ensure that transportation infrastructure takes into account climate change impacts and to actively address the threats of invasive vegetation species on provincial highways

Reliable Travel Options for Remote and Far North Communities

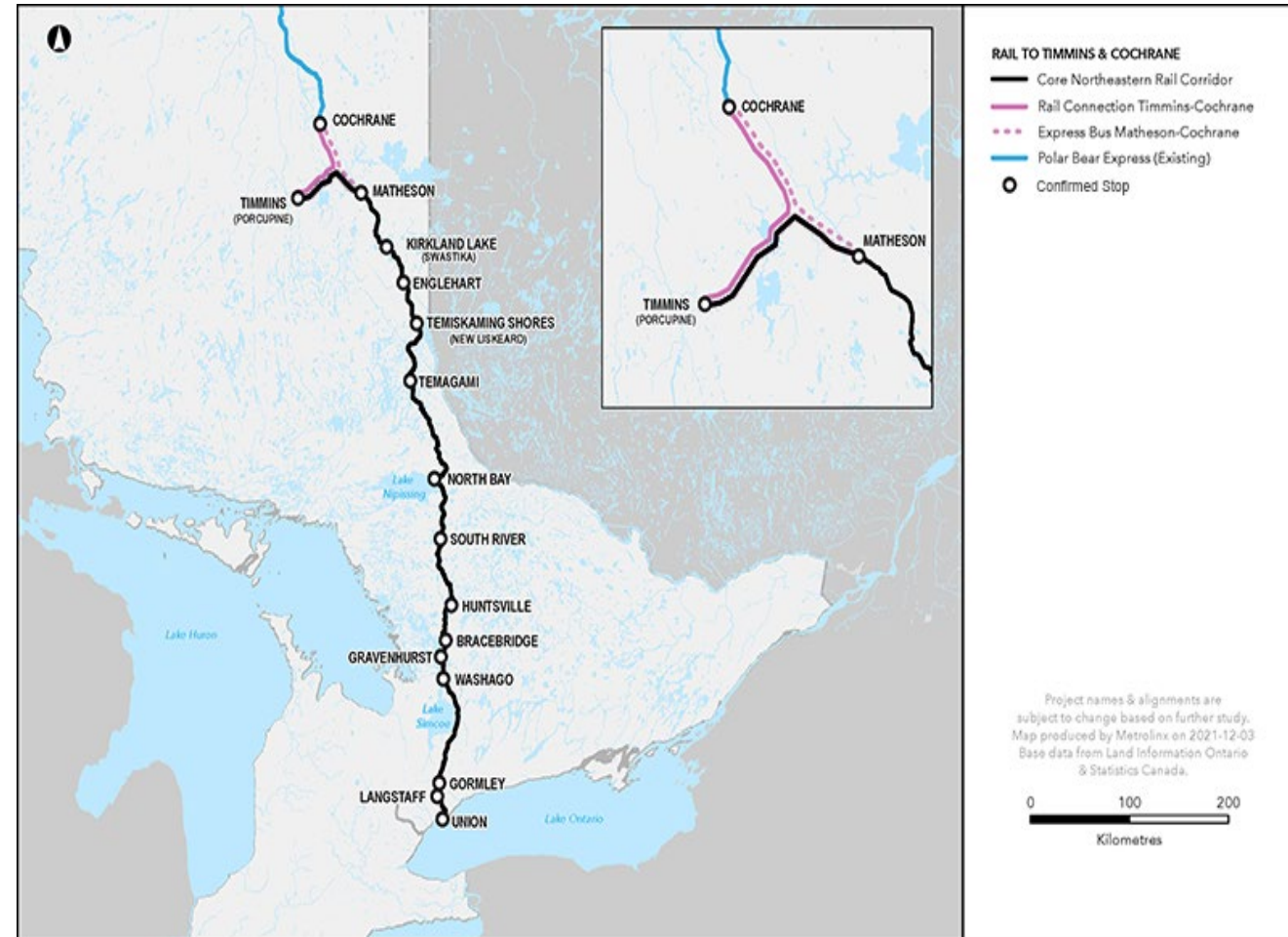
Including actions to support remote and northern airports, explore expanding winter road inspection and oversight, and advance the development of all season road projects

Examples of Plan Actions Related to Northern Ontario's Highway Network

<p>Highway Widening</p>	<p>Actions Include: #1. Advance the four-laning of Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon #2. Advance design work for the widening of Highway 69 from two to four lanes #3. Move forward with the widening of Highway 17 from Kenora to the Manitoba border</p>
<p>Road Improvements</p>	<p>Actions Include: #4. Complete the Environmental Assessment and preliminary design for the Cochrane by-pass from Highway 11 to Highway 652 #6. Continue to repair roadways and bridges as part of the Connecting Links program #7. Continue expansion of active transportation facilities including cycling lanes and paved shoulders on the cycling network in Northern Ontario</p>
<p>Winter Maintenance</p>	<p>Actions Include: #29. Increase proactive use of anti-icing liquids before storms to make it easier to clear snow after a winter storm #30. Continue to modernize winter maintenance contracts, including adding more equipment where warranted #31. Keep Highway 11 and 17 safer in winter by launching a pilot project to determine the feasibility for further improvements to maintenance standards</p>
<p>Highway Safety</p>	<p>Actions Include: #27. Increase availability of near real-time information, to keep travellers aware of current highway conditions #34. Continue to explore ways to improve uniformity and quality in pavement markings and traffic control devices that may be more durable, visible and better enable automation to improve safety on provincial highways #35. Review passing lane needs with a focus on Northeastern Ontario</p>

Northeastern Passenger Rail

- *Connecting the North* commits to continuing to move forward on the plan for passenger rail service in Northeastern Ontario (Action 17).
- In April 2022, the province released the Updated Initial Business Case (UIBC), which identified a preferred route. The proposed route includes 16 stops and will operate between Toronto (Union Station) and Timmins, with a rail connection to Cochrane where there is a connection to the Polar Bear Express service. As part of the UIBC news release, the government announced a target in-service date of the mid-2020s.
- In December 2022, the Province announced a \$139.5 million investment with the purchase of three new trainsets marking a significant milestone in reinstating service between Timmins and Toronto.
- The province is moving forward to implement next steps. Implementation activities include detailed design and engineering, environmental assessment, engagement with Indigenous communities and municipalities, and procurement and construction related to station and track improvement.



Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force

- The Northern Task Force was established by the minister in January 2022 to fulfill a commitment in *Connecting the North*.
Action #10: Establish a task force led by MTO with mayors, Indigenous communities and leadership, to improve rail, bus, and local transit services across Northern Ontario. The task force will focus on the transportation needs and opportunities in Northern Ontario with a strong emphasis on ensuring people can travel more efficiently and connect to critical services.
- The Task Force was intended to inform the ongoing implementation of and updates to the Northern Ontario Transportation Plan and was given the mandate to form a set of recommendations to be provided to the Minister of Transportation
- The Task Force met approximately 10 times over a 12-month term and focused on a range of transportation issues.
- On April 10, 2023, the Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force submitted their final report to the Minister of Transportation.
 - The Northern Task Force submitted an interim report to the minister in October 2022, which included 50 preliminary recommendations.
 - The final report includes 81 recommendations and incorporates the recommendations from the interim report.

Key Observations:

- The recommendations touch on a variety of transportation topics/issues, including passenger transportation, goods movement, rest stops, winter roads, capital planning, road safety and winter maintenance.
- While the ministry is aware of and actively pursuing initiatives to address these issues, many stakeholders continue to call for more and faster action.
- Some of the recommendations are outside the ministry's scope of jurisdiction (e.g., winter roads, under the purview of the Ministry of Northern Development).



Membership:

The Task Force is made up of 14 members, including those from municipalities and First Nations as well the private/non-profit sector

Co-chairs:

- Councillor Danny Whalen, President, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
- Mayor Wendy Landry, President, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association

Summary of Task Force Discussion Related to Highway Safety

- The Northern Task Force placed a strong emphasis on issues of highway safety and explicitly acknowledged that addressing highway safety is multifaceted and involves a variety of issues (e.g., road infrastructure, maintenance, communication, licensing, education, enforcement) that span MTO's mandate and involves many other OPS, community and other implementation partners.
- The key safety-related issues identified by the Northern Task Force mirror many of the findings from the NOMTS study and are currently being addressed through actions outlined in *Connecting the North*.

Road Widening and Improvements

- Advance new road widening projects, including incorporating the 2+1 Roadway Pilot Project.
- Work with municipalities and Indigenous communities to explore opportunities for the installation of turning lanes along provincial highways.

Highway Maintenance

- Improve highway minimum winter maintenance standards on Highways 11 and 17.
- Improve the highway winter maintenance contracting system, including increasing public oversight of private contractors.

Licensing and Enforcement

- Improve Ontario's training requirements for commercial drivers to support more stringent driver training and situational experience (e.g., developing specialized training for driving in Northern Ontario).
- Improve commercial vehicle monitoring/enforcement through increasing MTO's random stops and truck inspection stations.

Rest Stops

- Increase frequency of rest areas and pullovers.
- Need for more all-season rest stops, to ensure that commercial drivers transporting goods in winter have a safe place to pull over and avoid driving while fatigued.

Next Steps

- The draft transportation plan for Northern Ontario is considered a “living document” that will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- MTO will continue to review potential areas for update to the draft Northern Ontario transportation plan, including reviewing the needs and opportunities identified in NOMTS and *Connecting the North* as well as considering how the recommendations of the Northern Ontario Task Force can inform our planning work.
- We welcome any feedback or comments on Northern Ontario transportation planning (comments and questions can be provided at NorthernTransportationPlan@ontario.ca).

Thank You

Appendix A: Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy (NOMTS)

NOMTS Structure

- The NOMTS is organized around **five goals** to improve and transform the transportation system; the goals are supported by **37 directions** to guide the creation of the multimodal transportation system of the future
- Each direction is supported by *Sample Actions* (actions currently underway) &/or *Actions Under Consideration*

Connected and Prosperous

Increase and modernize transportation options to support everyday living and economic activity in Northern Ontario

Safe and Reliable

Enhance traveler safety and system reliability and minimize travel delays and complications

Address Remote & Far North Challenges

Work with remote and Far North communities to develop more reliable and affordable connections between communities and to the all-season road network

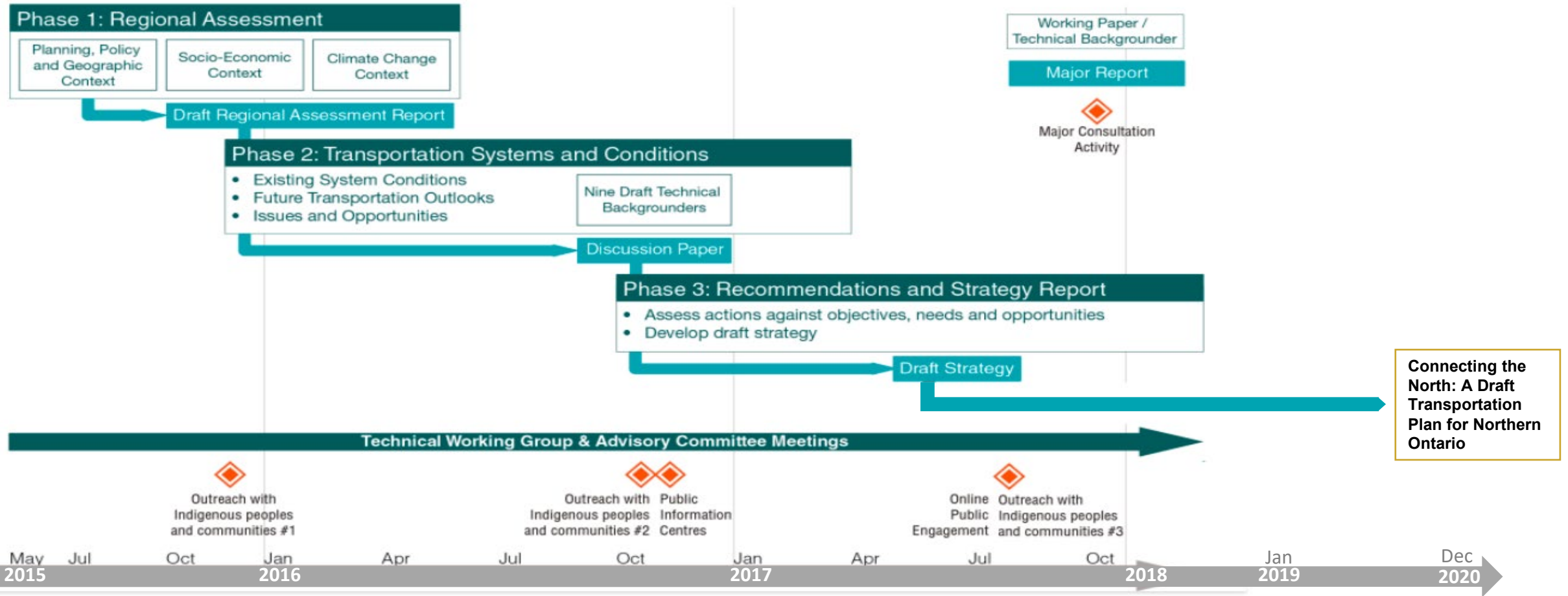
Integrated and Innovative

Anticipate and respond to economic, technological, environmental and social change to link people, resources and businesses

Healthy and Sustainable

Create a cleaner and more sustainable transportation system in Northern Ontario by reducing GHG emissions and other environmental and human health impacts

Strategy Development Process and Timeline



**Appendix B:
Northern Ontario
Transportation Task Force:**



Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force: Membership

Members:

- Danny Whalen (Co-Chair): President, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and Councillor, City of Temiskaming Shores
- Mayor Wendy Landry (Co-Chair): President, Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) and Mayor, Municipality of Shuniah
- Mayor Brian Bigger: Mayor of Greater Sudbury
- Mayor Daniel Reynard: Mayor of Kenora
- Mayor Dave Plourde: Mayor of Kapuskasing
- Mayor Doug Lawrance: Mayor of Sioux Lookout
- Mayor Johanne Baril: Mayor of the Municipality of Val Rita-Harty and President of NorthEastern Ontario Municipal Association
- Grand Chief Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh: Grand Council Treaty #3
- Chief Melvin Hardy: Northern Superior Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief, Anishinabek Nation
- Grand Chief Derek Fox: Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- Kevin Eshkawogan: CEO of Indigenous Tourism Ontario
- Alan Spacek: Chair of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission
- Charles Cirtwill: President and CEO of the Northern Policy Institute
- Ron Bumstead: Owner, Bumstead Trucking