

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Katerina Downard
Environmental Policy Office
777 Bay Street, 5th floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z8

Sent by email

August 16, 2022

Dear Katerina,

The National Capital Commission (NCC) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on “Connecting the East: A draft regional transportation plan for eastern Ontario” (April 2022).

The NCC is the federal crown corporation responsible for regional and interprovincial transportation planning in the National Capital Region (NCR), home to approximately 1.5 million people. The NCC is also responsible for planning federal lands in the NCR, including Canada’s Capital Greenbelt. The NCR represents the fourth largest metropolitan area in Canada and is the most populous urban area in Eastern Ontario, with 75% of eastern Ontario’s population growth in the next 30 years expected to occur in the Ottawa area. The NCR stretches across two provinces and eleven municipalities which form an integrated metropolitan region. It is critical to plan for transportation beyond provincial boundaries and for our organizations to collaborate closely.

The NCC supports the draft plan’s vision of a safe and reliable transportation system that connects local communities, and contributes to the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the entire region. Many of the actions proposed in the draft plan are aligned in principle with the NCC’s long term vision. We appreciate and support the commitment to work with the federal government to advance planning for the High Frequency VIA Rail proposal, and with the NCC to improve interprovincial crossings. The need to study and remove interprovincial truck traffic from Ottawa’s downtown core is a shared priority.

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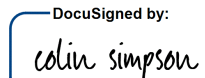
However, we are concerned that several of the actions proposed by the draft plan do not reflect the NCR's unique position as Canada's Capital, and do not position the region to achieve the plan's vision. One of our key concerns is the idea of a ring road around Ottawa, which is likely to adversely impact and further fragment Canada's Capital Greenbelt, one of the many federal assets that the NCC manages for future generations.

While the goals in the draft plan align well with the NCC's vision and plans for the region, some of the proposed actions require additional consultation and consideration. It is essential to plan for transportation in the NCR, and to emphasize sustainable transportation and the long term environmental, ecological and agricultural integrity the Capital Greenbelt, one of the many federal assets that the NCC manages for future generations. It is a fundamental aim of the NCC to safeguard the Greenbelt from encroachment and fragmentation by transportation and urbanization.

We also encourage the MTO to collaborate with us to ensure our transportation data, modeling and future assumptions are coordinated and consistent.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to working with you on this exciting and important project.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Colin Simpson
Chief, Transportation Planning, NCC

cc.

Lucie Bureau, A/Director, Transportation Planning, NCC
Matthew MacLean, Integrated Policy & Planning Division, MTO