



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES • SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

December 15, 2016

Ms. Arielle Mayer
Senior Policy Advisor
Ministry of Transportation
Policy and Planning Division
Transportation Planning Branch
Environmental Policy Office (Toronto)
777 Bay Street, Suite 3000
Toronto, ON M7A 2J8

**Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy (NOMTS)
Discussion Paper: Towards a Northern Ontario Multimodal
Transportation Strategy, EBR: 012-8890**

Dear Ms. Mayer,

On behalf of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), I am submitting the Institute's response with regards to the Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy (NOMTS) Discussion Paper: Towards a Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy, EBR Registry Number 012-8890.

OPPI members have reviewed the Discussion Paper from the perspective of Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) who provide their professional services and expert opinions to the public, private and not-for-profit sectors in Ontario.

OPPI is the recognized voice of the Province's planning profession. Our almost 4,500 members work in a range of Government Ministries and agencies, including municipalities and conservation authorities, and in private practice, in fields that include urban and rural development and transportation planning. OPPI members meet quality practice requirements and are accountable to OPPI and the public to practice ethically and to abide by a Professional Code of Practice. Only Full Members are authorized by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994, to use the title "Registered Professional Planner" (or "RPP").

The NOMTS is an instrumental document in analyzing the state of transportation in Northern Ontario and should form a catalyst for implementing the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011. The paper clearly identified a number of challenges (and solutions) facing the transportation of people and goods requiring immediate action, the lack of infrastructure and services and links to wider Northern Ontario community needs,

including but not limited to safety, health services, food security, economic development, First Nations engagement and communications. In recognizing the opportunities for improvement, the following comments primarily focus on road transportation issues in keeping with a perspective of realizing a level of service that should be considered acceptable and appropriate. The lack of satisfactory infrastructure is a starting point to be addressed.

The intent of the NOMTS vision statement and planning objectives cover the main areas to be addressed. Replacing the word “Enhancing” to “Providing for” would support action in the strategy implementation. An additional planning objective is recommended for establishing new benchmarks and performance measures for delivery of transportation infrastructure and services (short-term and long-term). The following are some specific comments:

1. There is an identified need for a reliable transportation network that is all-weather and year-round. Innovation in construction and improvements to highway and road systems are required.
2. In the discussion on highways, the need to address aging infrastructure is recommended.
3. There is a clear need for redundancy (alternate routes) and real-time information signs and information on highways. Additional passing lanes, highway widenings to four-lanes, rest areas and broadband coverage are needed safety improvements.
4. The discussion on the lack of availability of travel services appears to directly link to the lack of availability for human services (medical, education, etc.) to the local population, who must travel great distances to the nearest urban centre.
5. The description of intercommunity bus and rail identifies the need for less reliance on private sector services as these are unsustainable financially, therefore public sector or non-profit intervention is required as next steps.

Once it is available, we welcome the opportunity to review the Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 416-668-8469 or by email at l.ryan@ontarioplanners.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Ryan', followed by a horizontal line.

Loretta Ryan, RPP, CAE
Director, Public Affairs
Ontario Professional Planners Institute