

September 15th, 2017

Draft 2041 Northern Ontario
Multimodal Transportation Strategy
c/o Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
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Dear Sir/Madam,

The City of Greater Sudbury welcomes the opportunity to review the Draft 2041 Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy. In contemplation of future endorsement by resolution of City Council, I offer the comments below as our municipality's input in this consultation period.

As identified in the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, efficient and integrated transportation infrastructure is essential to enhance Northern Ontario's economy and is key to the region's long term growth and sustainability. We appreciate the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' (MNDM) efforts in developing a strategy that will guide future transportation policy, programs, and investment opportunities.

The five goals identified in the strategy, namely Connected and Prosperous, Safe and Reliable, Address Remote and Far North Challenges, Integrated and Innovative, and Healthy and Sustainable, certainly characterize the type of multimodal transportation system required in order to optimize the City of Greater Sudbury's (CGS) economic growth. Included below are key areas and partnerships that should be reflected in the final strategy and consequently, will influence implementation of the plan over the next 10 years.

Goal 1: Connected and Prosperous

1.3 Reinvalidate passenger rail service where appropriate

- It is important to highlight existing passenger rail service in Greater Sudbury. Particularly, the Sudbury-White River train (informally called the Budd Car), is operated by VIA Rail serving communities between Sudbury and White River three times a week. Additionally, VIA Rail's Toronto to Vancouver passenger route also stops in Sudbury. Both trains play an important role in facilitating the movement of people from remote areas to Sudbury both for tourism purposes as well as personal transportation. As the regional centre for health services in Northern Ontario, many patients from remote communities travel to Sudbury for specialized health services including cancer care, cardiology, orthopedics, etc.

1.6 *Align infrastructure standards and maintenance service levels with increasing commercial vehicle usage along corridors that are essential for current and future goods movements*

- The Côté Gold Project near Gogama, Ontario (IAM Gold) should be noted. Open pit mining operations are estimated to have throughput rate of approximately 30,000 tonnes per day, which will contribute to increasing commercial vehicle usage on Highway 144.
- This section should also emphasize the importance of the City of Greater Sudbury's municipal road network to the Province of Ontario's mining and mineral processing industry. The size of the Greater Sudbury and Sudbury Basin mineral deposits mean that most of the local production moves from mine to mill to smelter, and then to market, often travelling significant kilometers on our internal roads.

1.7 *Establish a preferred highway route for oversize/overweight (O/O) commercial vehicles and support appropriate O/O movements*

- We fully support the proposed preferred highway route for O/O commercial vehicles, however given the size and importance of Greater Sudbury's industrial assets, we would urge the MTO to ensure that this new route extends west from North Bay to include the City of Greater Sudbury.

1.10 *Support and enhance municipal airports' role in helping to deliver important public services, connect people and move goods*

- Municipal airports in Northern Ontario play a particularly important role for all five major cities in Northern Ontario, and this should be reflected in the strategy. Airports in Greater Sudbury (YSB), Timmins (YTS), North Bay (YYB), Thunder Bay (YQT) and Sault Ste Marie (YAM) play a critical role in the Northern Ontario economy by connecting our businesses to Toronto and the world. These are not municipal airports like others; they function at a higher level than traditional municipal airports.

1.11 *Increase market access to rail and marine modes for freight transport, where appropriate*

- The strategy should acknowledge presence of two transcontinental railways, CP and CN. The strategy should also highlight higher speed and higher capacity availability on these particular lines as they effectively bring northern products to market. In comparison, connector lines generally have lower weight limits and lower speed limits. Both factors should be considered when reviewing current market access and planning future investments to increase capacity.
- Greater Sudbury has been identified as a potential location for a new rail-truck hub in Northern Ontario and we would be particularly interested in pursuing local rail-truck and rail-rail hub projects.

Goal 2: Safe and Reliable

2.2 Expand cellular service across the transportation network in Northern Ontario

- As mentioned in the strategy, cellular service is not continuous across the northern Ontario transportation network. The City of Greater Sudbury fully supports the intent to improve cell service along major transportation corridors, especially along Highway 144.
- Further, given the large footprint of the City of Greater Sudbury (3,200 sq.km), some areas with the municipality remain remote from a communications perspective because of distance and low population density. Solutions to these challenges will enable people living in Northern Ontario to make full use of ongoing improvements in technology and communities, which in turn will improve the economic outlook of the City of Greater Sudbury and the Province of Ontario.

Goal 4: Integrated and Innovative

- The strategy should note that a Food Strategy has been developed for the City of Greater Sudbury in partnership with a number of key community stakeholders. The strategy prioritizes, among other things, the need to support business development in the agriculture and food processing sectors in order to increase local production and reduce long-distance transportation of food to Northern Ontario.
- Greater Sudbury is also home to the Province's first purpose-built hydroponic modular farm and was the first municipality in Ontario to issue a building permit to a modular farm as an agricultural outbuilding. The City of Greater Sudbury recognizes the many advantages of all-season local food production and has demonstrated its ability and interest in being part of the modernization and transformation of the agricultural sector.

Goal 5: Healthy and Sustainable

5.1 Reduce GHG emissions from car and truck transportation in northern Ontario by decreasing reliance on diesel and gasoline fuels and shifting to use of electricity and lower-carbon fuels

- As previously mentioned, the City of Greater Sudbury spans over a vast geography (3,200 sq.km). There is significant interest in expanding the network of charging points for electric vehicles throughout the City, which would facilitate the transition from heavy GHG-emitting fuels to electric vehicles and low-carbon fuel sources.
- Further, the City of Greater Sudbury would also be interested in exploring infrastructure for commercial truck electrification at key highway junction points.

We would like to express continued interest in the work of further developing the Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy as well as participating in the implementation of identified action items. The City of Greater Sudbury has demonstrated an ability to partner and deliver transportation projects that are

significant to the provincial economy, for example Fairbank Lake Road, which provided better road connection to Totten Mine, and the Maley Drive Extension project.

We will continue to look for ways to support the goals of the Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy and look forward to ongoing collaboration and partnerships with the Province of Ontario.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Archer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ed Archer
Chief Administrative Officer