



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

# NCC Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT  
NOVEMBER 9 TO 24, 2021

Canada

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## I. Project description

### A. Background

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is leading the development of the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan in collaboration with its provincial and municipal partners. This Plan will recommend the best way to manage travel across the Ottawa River, from now to 2050.

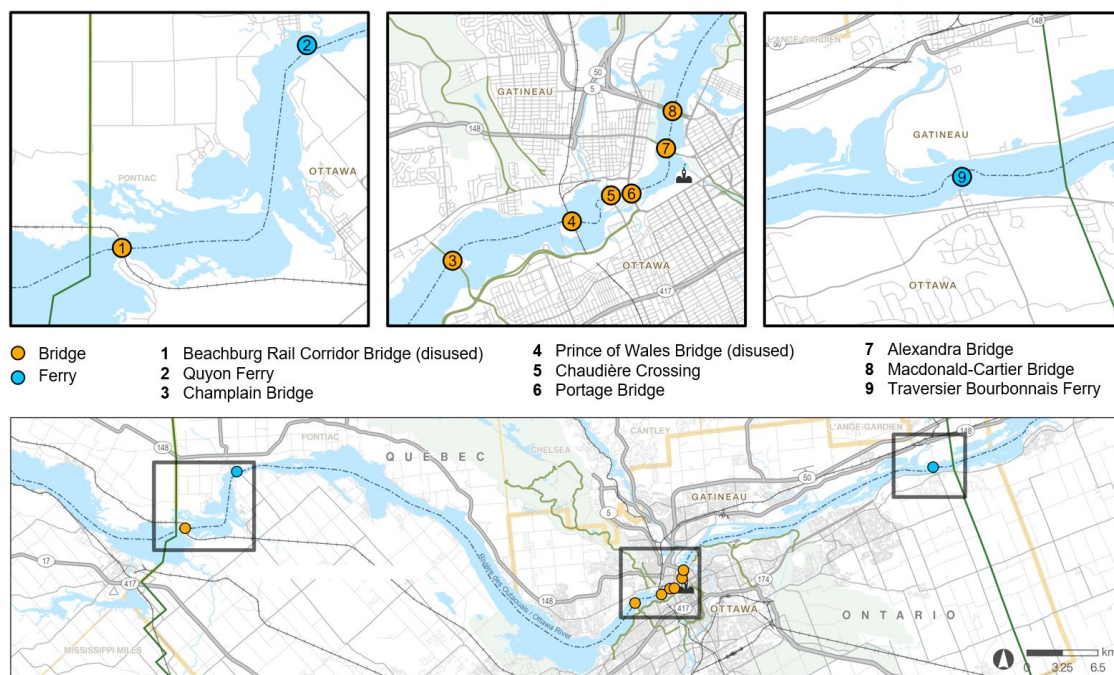
This Plan is particularly important now as more and more people and goods are expected to cross back and forth between Ottawa and Gatineau. Finding solutions for how people and goods travel more easily and efficiently across the Ottawa River is critical to the long-term wellbeing of Canada's National Capital Region (NCR) - environmentally, socially, and economically.

The Plan is one of a series of NCC and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) initiatives that are working towards the continued safety and function of the interprovincial crossings in the National Capital Region.

### Context

There are currently nine interprovincial crossings in the NCR including seven bridges and two ferries. The maps below (Exhibit 1) show the location of these crossings.

*Exhibit 1: Maps of interprovincial bridges and ferries in Canada's Capital Region*



Most interprovincial travel is made using the five vehicular bridges in the urban area. These are the Champlain Bridge, Chaudière Crossing, Portage Bridge, Alexandra Bridge and Macdonald-Cartier Bridge. Two other bridges — the Chief William Commanda Bridge near the Region’s core area and the Beachburg Rail Corridor Bridge in the west — are not in use. The two ferry crossings are located at the Region’s eastern and western edges.

The NCR, which consists mainly of the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, between which the Ottawa River flows, and the Municipalité régionale de comté (MRC) des Collines-de-l’Outaouais, is an integrated hub of economic, social and tourism activity. It is also one of the most populous metropolitan regions in Canada.

Many of the five interprovincial vehicular bridges are at or beyond their designed car-carrying capacity, leading to peak period congestion and delays. The population of the Ottawa-Gatineau area is expected to grow by one-fifth (19%, or approximately 300,000 people), with corresponding increasing demand for interprovincial travel.

Past studies have shown that in just ten years’ time, by 2031, the existing interprovincial vehicular bridges will have exceeded their designed capacity.

## **B. Plan objectives**

This Plan sets a blueprint for collaborating with partnering agencies to establish a shared long-term vision and strategies for the interprovincial transport of people and goods in the Region to 2050. The Plan treats the interprovincial crossings as a part of a “complete system” and will support the Region’s continued prosperity and quality of life, and satisfy the environmental, economic and social needs of communities and businesses.

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Improve the movement of people and goods on the existing interprovincial bridges.
- Assess how planned modifications to some of the bridges will influence future interprovincial travel demands and patterns.
- Recommend innovative solutions to meet future travel needs, focusing on sustainable and low-carbon solutions.
- Recommend strategies that can reduce interprovincial heavy truck traffic through the central area.
- Account for emerging remote work trends and emerging technological innovations that can affect how people travel.
- Recommend a workable governance framework for interprovincial transportation planning that is more collaborative and responsive.

## C. Planning process

The 2019 federal budget directed that the NCC develop the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan in collaboration with both provincial and municipal governments. This collaboration included meetings with the project Core Team and Steering Committee, including an academic advisory committee, in each phase of the planning process to provide planning updates and seek input and direction on the Strategic Plan. The development of the Plan was conducted in the following four phases.

<b>Phase 1: Needs and Opportunities</b>	Spring 2020	Reviewed existing plans/policies and reviewed travel patterns and forecasts
<b>Phase 2: Establish Vision and Goals</b>	Summer / Fall 2020	Established vision, supporting goals, and objectives
<b>Phase 3: Develop and Evaluate Future Scenarios</b>	Winter 2020 / Spring 2021	Developed and evaluated conceptual scenarios to identify potential solutions
<b>Phase 4: Develop the Strategic Plan</b>	Fall/Winter 2021	Identified a series of potential strategies to achieve the vision

## II. Public consultation process

### A. Overview

#### a. Consultation objective

This summary report documents what we heard from the second of two rounds of public and stakeholder engagements. The first round was completed in November 2020. The purpose of this second round of consultation was to provide members of the public and stakeholders the opportunity to review the draft Strategic Plan and provide comments through a brief online questionnaire, in addition to stakeholder workshops.

#### b. Date and time

The questionnaire was available in English and French on the NCC's website from November 9 to November 24, 2021.

Two stakeholder workshops were held, one in English and one in French, on November 16 and November 18, 2021 respectively from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

## **B. Consultation procedure and tools**

### **a. Online consultation**

The online consultation was hosted on the NCC study website in both English and French. The questionnaire included the following questions:

- Do you agree with the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan?
- What do you like about the plan?
- What do you think could be improved in the plan?

As an alternative to the online survey, members of the public were invited to provide comments via phone to the NCC's Help Line and email to the NCC.

### **b. Stakeholder workshops**

Two virtual stakeholder workshops, one in English and one in French, were held on November 16 and November 18, 2021 respectively from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Each workshop included a presentation on the draft Strategic Plan and discussion. Each workshop had the following format.

- Introductions and opening remarks
- Overview of the draft Strategic Plan including:
  - Plan development process
  - Future interprovincial travel needs
  - Strategic Plan vision
  - Transportation trends
  - Potential directions
  - Key findings
  - Overall Strategic Plan directions
  - Strategic framework
  - Monitoring plan
  - Governance
- Questions and discussion
- Next steps

## **C. Invitation and promotion**

An email invitation for the online consultation was sent using Public Affairs distribution lists, which include the following types of stakeholders:

- Interest groups, user groups and heritage groups;
- Business, industry and transportation associations;
- Residents' associations; and
- Members of the general public registered to receive public engagement notices.

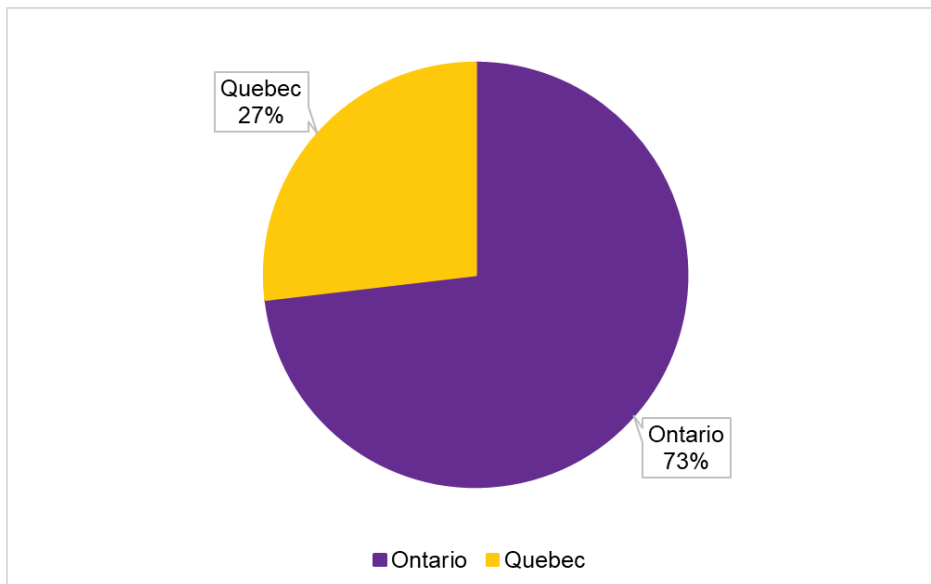
Messages were also posted on the NCC's social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), soliciting the participation of all interested members of the public. A paid digital advertising campaign was also launched on these same platforms throughout the duration of the survey.

## D. Participants

### a. Online consultation

There were over 4,689 responses to at least one questionnaire question and 1,371 fully complete questionnaires.

Of the 1,400 participants who provided location information 73% reported being residents of Ontario, while 27% reported being residents of Quebec.



### b. Stakeholder workshops

A total of 67 organizations were invited to participate in the workshops. Six participants attended the workshops representing the following organizations:

- Ottawa-Gatineau Hotel Association;
- Federation of Citizens Associations of Ottawa;
- Transport Action Canada;
- Manor Park Community Association;
- Action Sandy Hill; and
- Action Vélo Outaouais.

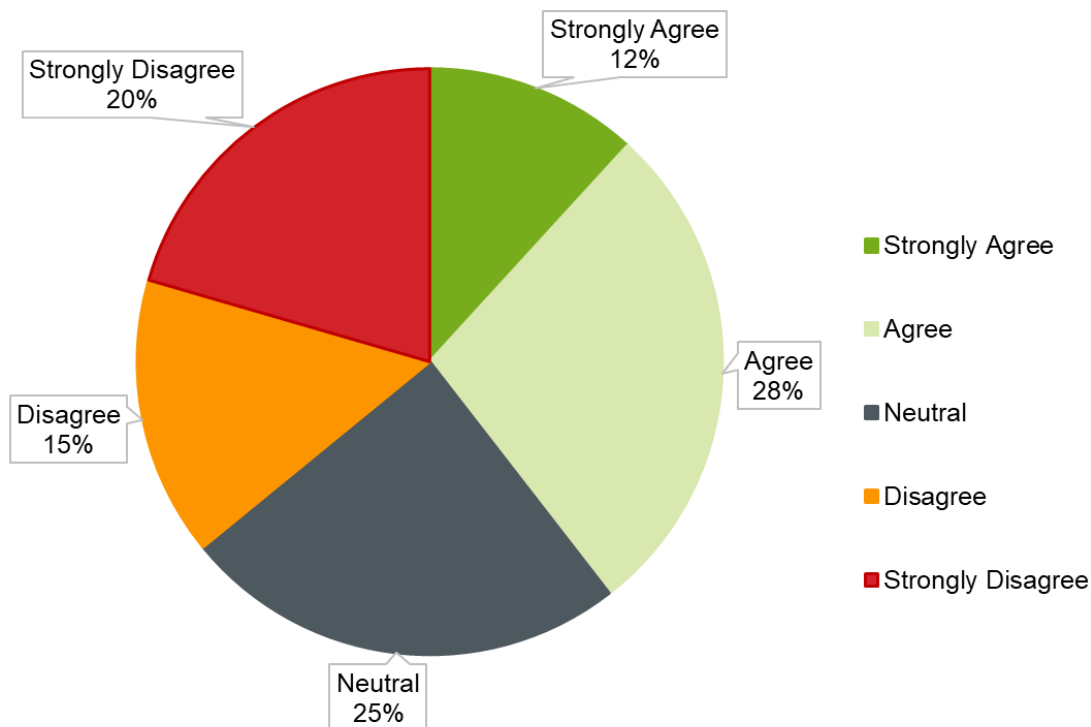
In addition to stakeholder feedback received during the meetings, an additional written submission was received from the New Edinburgh Community Association.

### III. Public consultation highlights

This section provides an overview of the key themes from the online questionnaire.

Participants were asked, “Do you agree with the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan.” Of the 1,585 participants who responded to this question:

- 40% indicated support for the Strategic Plan;
- 35% indicated disagreement with the Strategic Plan; and
- 25% indicated a neutral opinion.



The key themes from the questions asking participants what they liked about the Strategic Plan and what could be improved are summarized below.

- **New Infrastructure** - Strong desire for clear directions about future interprovincial infrastructure.
- **Support for sustainability** - Robust support for interprovincial sustainable travel options.
- **Neighbourhood Impacts** - concerns about community quality of life and the need to find sustainable solutions to managing interprovincial truck traffic.



- **More details** - There is a desire for more details about the Plan, including implementation specifics.

## **IV. Analysis of results**

### **A. Online consultation**

The following section provides an overview of the comments received as part of the online consultation.

#### **What do you like about the plan?**

Some highlights from those who answered the question include an appreciation of the existence of a plan and a direction for moving forward. Many participants noted a desire to improve interprovincial travel. Multiple responses were shared in appreciation of the emphasis placed on environmental concerns and sustainability. Some shared that they believed the plan was a detailed and serious attempt to address the most pressing issues regarding interprovincial crossings. Some applauded the overall vision and framework. Respondents expressed that they enjoyed the focus on active transportation. Further appreciation was expressed for how the plan intends to optimize existing infrastructure. The building of a 6th bridge was quite a popular idea, and many appreciated the recognition on the part of the NCC that a new bridge would not solve all the concerns regarding transportation. The focus on the need to address traffic was also valued, specifically highlighting the approach to addressing truck traffic in the downtown area. The collaborative spirit of the plan across the government and between the provinces was common appreciative comment.

#### **What could be improved in the plan?**

On the subject of what could be improved, a reoccurring comment was the thought that the plan was too vague and failed to provide current specific recommendations. Some did not agree with demolishing the Alexandra Bridge or building a bridge on Kettle Island. On the topic of the construction of bridges, some advocated for fewer bridges while others wanted the opposite. Some participants proposed considering building a tunnel rather than a bridge. Others believed investing in an interprovincial transit loop was the best way forward. Some shared their concern about the timeline and wanted the NCC to move faster on this project. Some participants noted that they did not believe that the plan took post-pandemic travel into serious consideration, as such they believed that planning should wait until after pandemic conditions have settled in order to accurately assess what future conditions would look like. Some participants wanted the plan to maximize its commitment against climate change and go beyond what has been outlined. On the composition of the plan itself respondents noted that they wanted the PDF document to be shorter and searchable in a reader.

## Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Long-term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan?

While most respondents said no, 42% replied with yes and shared some additional thoughts. Here similar comments were expressed with the previous question on what respondents felt could be improved about the plan. The most common reoccurring theme was the desire for immediate action. As well as the hope that the NCC will work with local businesses, residents and truckers in the execution of this plan. In the implementation of the plan, some noted their hope that a focus will be placed on short and medium-term goals. They also wanted increased transparency in public consultations and desired deeper consultation where the public could be more involved. Finally, a passionate desire to preserve the Alexandra Bridge was repeatedly mentioned by participants.

### B. Stakeholder workshops

Feedback from the two stakeholder workshops generally aligned with the key themes from the online questionnaire. The key themes are summarized below.

- **More background information:** participants requested more background information on the existing crossings and key interprovincial travel trends. Participants also suggested that the Strategic Plan should include references to previous studies.
- **Support for sustainability:** participants were supportive of providing more sustainable travel options, including transit, active transportation, and shared mobility.
- **Consider impacts on neighbourhoods:** participants expressed concern about impacts to community quality of life caused by heavy trucks and the need to find sustainable solutions to managing interprovincial truck traffic. Participants also suggested that planned development be accounted for when findings solutions to managing interprovincial truck traffic.
- **Need for updated data:** participants emphasized the importance of collecting up-to-date and reliable data, with a focus on understanding post-COVID travel patterns.

## **V. Integration of results**

The feedback received as part of this engagement round informed several changes to the Strategic Plan. Changes to the Plan include:

- Additional information on previous interprovincial transportation planning studies;
- Additional information on the existing interprovincial bridges including vehicle volumes;
- New information about potential measures that would be required to further reduce heavy truck movements in the central area beyond building new crossings; and
- Minor edits throughout the document to provide additional clarity.

As the Strategic Plan is a living document, comments received during this round of engagement will also be considered during future Plan updates.

## **VI. Next steps**

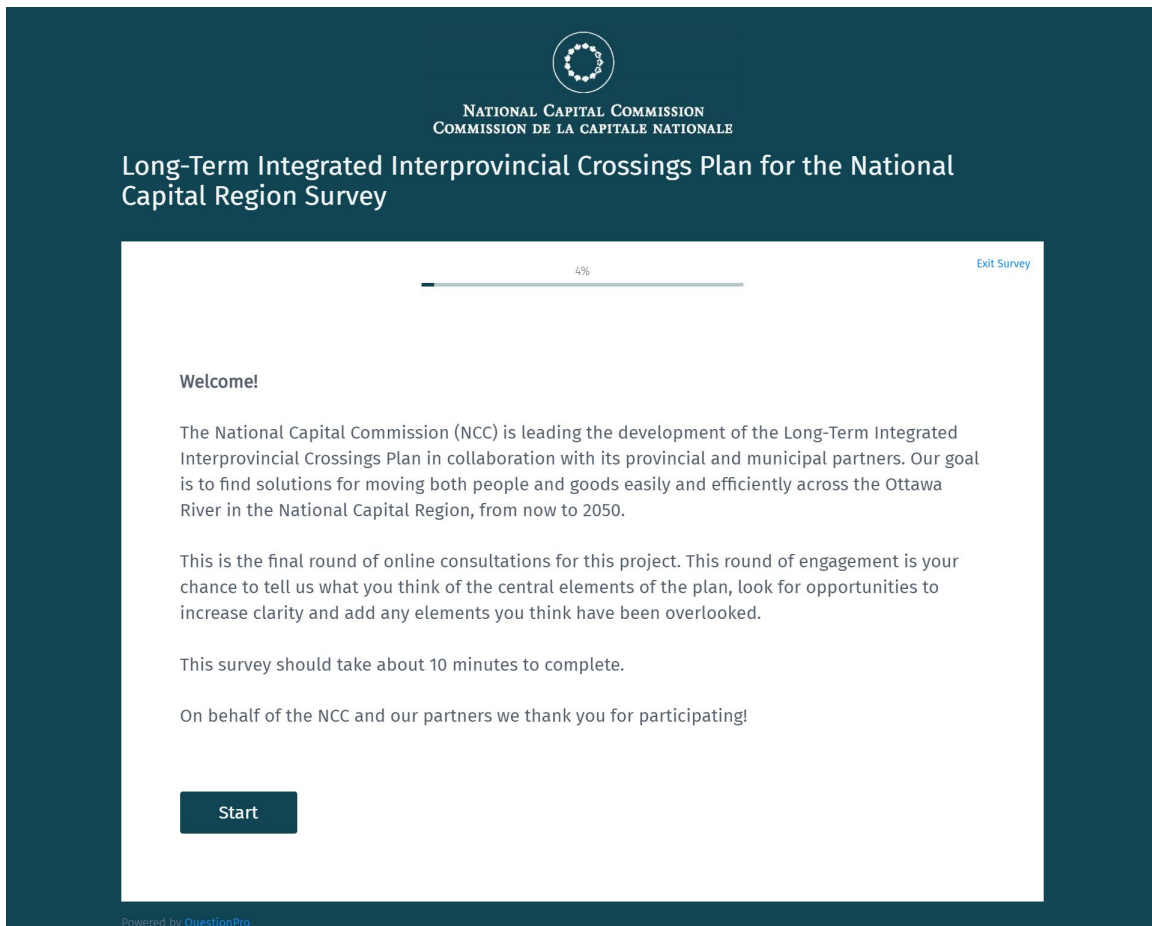
The next steps in the Plan development process are as follows:

- Update the Plan based on feedback (December 2021);
- NCC Board approval (January 2022);
- Implementation and monitoring (2022+); and
- Update the Plan after the Origin-Destination data refresh (2023+).

## Appendix 1: Online survey

1. Do you agree with the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan?
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neutral
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
2. What do you like about the plan?
3. What do you think could be improved in the plan?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan

The full survey is provided below.



The screenshot displays the survey interface within a dark teal frame. At the top center is the National Capital Commission logo, a circular emblem with a stylized sunburst. Below the logo, the text "NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION" and "COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE" is displayed in white. The main title of the survey, "Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey", is prominently displayed in white. A progress bar at the top indicates 4% completion, with an "Exit Survey" link on the right. The survey content is presented in a white box with a light gray border. It begins with a "Welcome!" heading, followed by a paragraph explaining the NCC's role in developing the plan and its goal of finding solutions for moving people and goods across the Ottawa River by 2050. This is followed by a paragraph stating that this is the final round of online consultations and that participants' input is crucial for improving the plan. A third paragraph notes that the survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. The survey concludes with a thank you message on behalf of the NCC and its partners. A dark teal "Start" button is positioned at the bottom left of the white content area. At the very bottom of the frame, a small text line reads "Powered by QuestionPro".

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Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

4% Exit Survey

**Welcome!**

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is leading the development of the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan in collaboration with its provincial and municipal partners. Our goal is to find solutions for moving both people and goods easily and efficiently across the Ottawa River in the National Capital Region, from now to 2050.

This is the final round of online consultations for this project. This round of engagement is your chance to tell us what you think of the central elements of the plan, look for opportunities to increase clarity and add any elements you think have been overlooked.

This survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

On behalf of the NCC and our partners we thank you for participating!

**Start**

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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

13%

[Exit Survey](#)

### About the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan

The NCC is leading the development of the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan in collaboration with its provincial and municipal partners. The objectives of this collaboration are as follows:

- Find solutions for how people and goods can travel safely, more efficiently and sustainably across the Ottawa River from now until the year 2050.
- Plan for the long-term environmental, social and economic well-being of the National Capital Region.

The development of the plan is now almost complete, and Phase 4 is currently underway. During this phase the short, medium and longer-term strategies for interprovincial movement will be listed, the draft plan will be finalized, and the plan will be presented to the public and stakeholders for additional feedback.



Next

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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

8%

[Exit Survey](#)

### Privacy Notice Statement

The collection and use of your personal information in this questionnaire is in accordance with the *Privacy Act*, and authorized under the *National Capital Act*. We will use your responses for the following purposes: to inform the development of the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan and to better understand the reach of the NCC's public engagement initiatives. Information relating to "Outreach Activities" is described in Personal information Bank PSU 938. The information is protected in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act*. Your personal information will not be shared. Under the *Privacy Act*, you have the right to access your personal information, request corrections if you believe that some personal information is erroneous or incomplete and add a notation to the information at issue. If you wish to access your personal information contained in Personal Information Banks PSU 938, you should communicate with the Chief, Access to Information and Privacy, by telephone at 613-239-5678, extension 5788, or via the following email address: [atip-aiprp@ncc-ccn.ca](mailto:atip-aiprp@ncc-ccn.ca).



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

17%

[Exit Survey](#)

### Overview

We encourage you to review the [draft plan here](#) to help guide your input on the plan.

Once you have read the draft plan, we would like to know what you think. The following questions are your opportunity to reflect on the information you have reviewed and provide your input on the plan. Please consider the **vision, plan direction, strategic framework, governance, and monitoring framework** in your responses.

Your responses will help inform the final draft of the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan as the project moves forward.



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

34%

[Exit Survey](#)

### Questions

Do you agree with the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What do you like about the plan?

What do you think could be improved in the plan?



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

43%

[Exit Survey](#)

### Final Thoughts

Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

56%

[Exit Survey](#)

### About You!

Please tell us a bit more about yourself. This information will be used to help us gain a better understanding of **who** we are engaging with and **what** views participants hold.

Have you participated in a previous consultation about developing the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossing Plan?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Are you a resident of the National Capital Region?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

60%

[Exit Survey](#)

Which side of the river do you live on?

- ☐ South (Ontario side)
- ☐ North (Quebec side)



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

82%

[Exit Survey](#)

What is your age?

-- Select --



With which of the following gender identities do you identify?

-- Select --



Do you identify as a member of a visible minority?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Do you identify as Indigenous — that is, First Nations, Metis or Inuit?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

According to the *Accessible Canada Act*, disability means “any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.”

Do you identify as a person with a disability?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say



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## Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region Survey

100%

[Exit Survey](#)

### Give Us Your Feedback!

Before you go, please take this opportunity to give us some feedback on the survey. Your feedback is valuable to us as we are continually seeking to improve and find new ways to meaningfully engage with the public.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The information in this survey was accessible (e.g. language, readability, font size, and so on).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The information was sufficient and clear, allowing me to fully participate in the consultation process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that my feedback will be considered in the planning and decision-making process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were there any unforeseen problems with the survey?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Do you have any additional comments on the survey?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No



Finish

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## **Appendix 2: Written submissions**



December 2, 2021

## **New Edinburgh Community Alliance**

### **Response to public consultation:**

#### **National Capital Commission Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan**

New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA) is pleased to provide its response via email with respect to the recent online survey on the interprovincial crossings strategic plan.

We are providing this response via email since the online survey did not provide sufficient room for our comments. Although the online survey closed on November 24, 2021, we would appreciate your taking our comments into consideration when compiling the “what we heard” report.

If we recall correctly from reading the online survey, there were three key questions along these lines:

**A. What do we like about the report?**

**B. What do not like about the report and needs improvement?**

**C. What is our feedback on this survey?**

---

**A. What do we like about the report?**

The findings in the report clearly state that **heavy truck movements represent one of two of the biggest challenges for interprovincial travel** (page v). That point is well worth noting in the context of whether the National Capital Region (NCR) truly needs another interprovincial crossing. It is clear from this report that

**another crossing is not absolutely necessary** since there are many other options to address the issues, as cited in the report.

The strategic plan directions that are about **better data, sustainability focus and regional collaboration** (page vii) are appropriate and important in our view.

The strategic plan's focus on **protecting the environment and improving quality of life** (page viii) is also critical and we support it.

The concerns about commuter traffic should be considered through the lens of impacts of remote-work on future commuter travel, as the report implies. There is significant uncertainty and a lack of robust data to confidently forecast the impacts of remote-work arrangements on commuter traffic trends into the future in the NCR. This is not the basis for good decision-making where impacts will be felt by communities for decades to come.

## **B. What do we not like about the report and needs improvement?**

NECA recommends the following improvements to the plan:

- Be mindful of the impact on communities of considering another interprovincial crossing – especially the impact of trucks and the loss of greenspace.
- Focus on the option to update existing bridges that are currently unused (e.g. Chief William Commanda Bridge)
- Focus on light rail transit (LRT) and active transportation on any and all existing bridges
- Consider the role of “ring roads” to divert traffic from the city core
- Be clear and detailed about a tunnel as an alternative.<sup>1</sup> In particular, note the potential for this option to divert an estimated 65 per cent of truck traffic from King Edward Avenue (according to a previous study cited by the City of Ottawa) or at least 33% according to this plan, as compared to the minimal 15 per cent diversion that is estimated via a proposed sixth bridge.

The strategic plan **lacks specific goals** and it **lacks an overall vision for transportation challenges of the region**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ottawa.ca/en/parking-roads-and-travel/transportation-planning/completed-projects/downtown-ottawa-truck-tunnel#overview-downtown-ottawa-truck-tunnel>. The tunnel's location is described as follows: “The study finds that the preferred alignment would be between the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge and Highway 417 at Vanier and Riverside via a cross-town route under Lowertown and Sandy Hill. The 3.4-kilometre tunnel would be four lanes wide, with two lanes in each direction, and would be used by both cars and trucks.”



NECA would recommend that **diverting truck traffic from the core (without shifting its impact to another community)** and **protecting the environment** be cited as the primary goals of the plan, in response to the feedback during the previous consultations (page 6) and the summary of findings in this plan.

The statement in the plan that “diverting heavy truck travel from the core areas will require more than a new crossing” is highly pertinent to whether to consider an additional crossing. Yet the plan does not set an objective of addressing that issue fully, rather than focusing on how to proceed with an interprovincial crossing.

A new bridge would divert only 15 per cent of truck traffic away from the downtown core by 2050, as cited in the plan and note above.

However, a downtown tunnel would divert 33% of truck traffic, which is the more than double the estimate for a new bridge (page 27). The tunnel presents a more valuable option to explore for that reason.

**An interprovincial crossing should not be explored if it does not seriously address the truck traffic in the core.** The report and its strategic directions are lacking in ambition. They are defeatist in tone and disheartening for all those in the communities that are currently affected, and/or will be affected should a crossing be established.

### C. What is our feedback on this survey?

The online survey as part of the public consultation was not an inclusive way to canvas citizens’ input on the draft strategic plan for a number of reasons:

1. The **consultation period was brief**, lasting just 15 days from November 9 to 24. For community organizations it was a highly limited time period to gather input and draft their responses.
2. The **online survey format was highly restrictive**, offering only 260 characters of space for answers to the two main questions. For members of a community, such limited space was **not conducive to providing their informed perspectives** in response to the 60-page document.

For those reasons, we respectfully request again that you take this response into consideration as you compile your report on the online survey.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cindy Parkanyi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cindy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Parkanyi".

Cindy Parkanyi  
President, New Edinburgh Community Alliance



Nov 2, 2020

Sustainable Solutions - Solutions durables

[www.ssd-ottawa.ca](http://www.ssd-ottawa.ca)

National Capital Commission – Interprovincial Crossings Study Team

Re: Study Phase 2 Comments

### **Introduction:**

Sustainable Solutions – Solutions durables (SSD) has been focused since 2008 on interprovincial transportation and in particular on solutions to the long-standing and difficult matter of heavy interprovincial trucks in Ottawa's downtown. In doing so, we provide a source of information, education, and outreach to communities, engage in advocacy with elected officials and comment on studies related to interprovincial transportation. We are composed of members from a wide geographical area who became acquainted through our participation in the NCC-led 2008-2013 study process to select a preferred corridor for a new interprovincial crossing in the National Capital Region. We became convinced as that process unfolded that a new crossing was not the right solution to the problem of up to 2000 interprovincial trucks transiting through Ottawa's downtown streets on a daily basis, a solution which moreover would create harmful impacts on additional well-established residential communities on both sides of the river.

### **The Ottawa Downtown Truck Problem:**

The truck problem in Ottawa's downtown was created when the Macdonald-Cartier bridge was constructed in 1965. In the 55 years since then, the problem has grown to 2600 trucks per day (1700 of which are non-local)<sup>1</sup>, and the majority of which are large tractor trailers. During the peak truck traffic periods in the mid-morning and mid-afternoon a truck rolls down King Edward, Rideau, and Waller streets approximately every 20 seconds. In addition, there are up to 25,000 cars per day transiting through Ottawa's downtown streets directly between the bridge and Highway 417.<sup>2</sup> This traffic burden

<sup>1</sup> Truck and Car volume data from the 2016 Tunnel Feasibility Study, Parsons Engineering

<sup>2</sup> Additional heavy trucks also traverse Ottawa's downtown between Hwy 417 and the Chaudière Bridge via Booth and Preston streets.

has resulted in severe safety and environmental degradation to adjoining residential communities and has led to considerable challenges in the development and renewal of Ottawa's core historical downtown areas. We submit that this situation is one of the most severe of its kind in the whole country. It is also not fitting for the downtown of a G7 capital.

Interprovincial Crossings Study (the 'Study') Comments:

We participated in the online consultations process but we would like to provide further comment by way of this letter. In particular, we would like to highlight three broad areas.

**1. Maintaining adequate priority on the Ottawa downtown interprovincial truck problem.**

It is our view that the resolution of the issue of the interprovincial transportation of goods must be one of the main considerations in the Study. Previous studies have shown that potential initiatives that provide the best connectivity/capacity solutions for the movement of people do not provide a particularly good solution to the movement of goods, and vice versa. This Study needs to be clearer about this challenge and clearly indicate the extent to which any proposed alternative addresses these two fundamentally different issues.

**2. Consideration of access routes to existing (and any proposed) crossings.**

The Study needs to confer equal or greater importance to the impact of interprovincial cars and trucks on existing residential communities as it does to peak period congestion on the crossings. A comprehensive interprovincial transportation plan thus must take into consideration the access routes to existing interprovincial bridges, their challenges, and opportunities to improve them. This should extend as well to the impact of access routes to any proposed new crossings. In particular we note the lack of adequate connectivity between Highways 417 and 5/50 and look to the Study to address this issue. The suitability of and potential improvements to access routes should be reflected in the range of potential scenarios that are tabled and evaluated in later stages of the Study.

### **3. Recognition of the unique environmental situation in the National Capital Region (the “NCR”).**

In the NCR, most of the shoreline on both sides of the Ottawa River is undeveloped natural environment (some of it of high ecological importance and protected from development) with significant recreational use. Furthermore, the Province of Quebec is currently planning on developing the largest wildlife preserve in the province between McLaurin Bay and the Plaisance National Park. There are more than 31 animals classified as threatened, vulnerable or likely to become so living in the wetlands along the river.

Adding any major new transportation artery through this area will significantly and permanently alter the natural environment. This sets the bar higher than might otherwise be the case, for instance if there were significant existing industrial sites on the river shore through which a new transportation artery could be routed. The negative impact on the natural and recreational environment must be considered for any new interprovincial transportation artery. Any proposal for such a new artery must be demonstrated to have greater benefits than costs (including environmental costs) to be carried forward.

Attached as an appendix to this letter is our detailed point by point feedback on the proposed Guiding Principles and Evaluation Criteria that were made public by the NCC at the Stakeholders’ Meeting.

### **Conclusion**

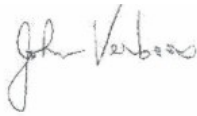
In the National Capital Region, we have a unique opportunity before us. Finally, we are embarking on a study to take a comprehensive view of solving interprovincial transportation problems rather than focusing narrowly on where to locate a new bridge, i.e. predetermining that a new bridge offers the most appropriate solution. It is critical that this study takes a comprehensive approach to the interprovincial transportation challenges in the NCR.

We also urge the NCC and its study partners to build on the lessons learned, to recognize the failure in the past to achieve a consensus on the need for, and possible location of, a sixth interprovincial bridge. Would the result of a narrowly focused approach be any different this time?

We will be sharing this letter with our elected representatives at all three levels of government keeping them informed of our perspective and activities. SSD would like to thank the NCC for providing the opportunity to comment. We can be reached at [info@ssd-ottawa.ca](mailto:info@ssd-ottawa.ca)

Sustainable Solutions – Solutions durables.

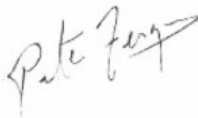
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John Verbaas  
Sandy Hill



Louis Caron  
Orléans



Peter Ferguson  
Lowertown



John Forsey  
Manor Park

## **Appendix: Detailed Feedback to Existing Conditions, Vision & Guiding Principles, and Evaluation Criteria**

### **1. Sixth Interprovincial Bridge Crossing – Study Refresh**

In addition to the 2009-2013 Sixth Crossing Study there has also been the 2016 Tunnel Feasibility Study conducted by Parsons (funded by the City of Ottawa and Province of Ontario) to provide a superior access between Highway 417 and the Macdonald-Cartier bridge. Such a tunnel was determined to be feasible. The current Study must take into consideration the findings of that 2016 Study and include consideration of such a tunnel.

### **2. Existing Conditions**

- a. **Near capacity at peak periods:** The Study notes that existing crossings are near capacity at peak periods. Although this may be true, this does not establish the need for a new crossing. In most cases, major travel routes in metro areas having a population more than one million are at capacity at peak periods. Most metro areas react to this situation by focusing on transit solutions, since construction of additional capacity for private automobiles has been demonstrated not to provide a long-term solution.
- b. **Capacity of Macdonald-Cartier bridge:** the material states that the M-C bridge has a V-C ratio of near 1. It is our understanding a 3-lane free-flow artery (without intersection constraints) has a capacity of upwards of 6000 vph. With the M-C bridge current peak

volume of 4400 vph, a case can be made that there is still considerable unused capacity on the M-C bridge. Frequent traffic slowdowns in the PM peak on the M-C bridge are not due to congestion on the bridge itself but are in fact due to congestion on the east-bound Highway 50 that results in bottlenecks that queue back onto the bridge. Initiatives are possible on both the Gatineau and Ottawa sides of the Macdonald-Cartier bridge that could make meaningful improvements to the volume of traffic it could carry. Thus, an existing condition is that the M-C Bridge (and several other of the existing bridges) are in fact volume constrained by the approaches to and from the bridge and these approaches need to be an important part of the analysis that is to be performed.

- c. **Lack of data re. traffic trends:** Given that most major arteries in large metro areas are at capacity during peak periods a much more useful analysis of existing conditions would be a trend analysis of congestion levels. What is the historical level of congestion (delays) experienced and what are the year over year changes in these congestion levels? It should be noted that for several decades now various crossings studies have forecasted serious worsening congestion. It is not at all clear that this has been happening in the NCR and no data has been provided to substantiate any claims of worsening congestion. It is also important to understand how the congestion trends are changing individually for each crossing.
- d. **Truck traffic levels:** separate reporting should be provided for truck traffic levels. To put on the same chart (as has been done thus far) the truck volumes as auto volumes is to fail to adequately treat the impact of truck traffic. In contrast, showing truck volumes by time of day on its own chart would reveal the volume at the Macdonald-Cartier bridge (and its Ottawa approaches) is close to 200 trucks (2/3 of which are tractor trailers) per hour during peak periods, which is a truck approximately every 20 seconds. This existing condition needs to be clearer in the study.
- e. **Congestion vs Neighbourhood Impacts:** It should be recognized that 2/3 of the region's population generally does not experience an issue with interprovincial travel congestion. In fact, for a large proportion of the National Capital Region's population the largest issue is the negative impact of interprovincial cut-through traffic and trucks in their neighbourhoods, which seriously impacts their health, safety and evolution as complete communities. Despite this fact, lessening impacts on local communities is not listed in the "Needs and Opportunities" section, but it should be.
- f. **Impact of Covid-19.** The documentation indicates that this will be considered in later stages of the plan. However, the plan is proposed to be complete by mid-2021 and it is extremely unlikely that the long-term effects of Covid-19 on peak period transportation patterns will be clear before the end of this Study.

### 3. Vision Statement

- a. **'safe and sustainable'.** Given that any major road-based infrastructure carries with it inevitable negative impacts on adjacent communities, the vision statement needs to make reference to the importance of minimizing those negative impacts. The vision statement should better capture the importance of balancing the desire for more connectiv-

ity/capacity with the desire to minimize the impact on the communities that are being affected by the approaches to interprovincial crossings (existing or proposed).

- b. **“well-connected”**. It is important that the term ‘well-connected’ should encompass the connections to/from crossings as well as the number and location of crossings themselves. Already many of the existing bridges are constrained not by the bridges themselves but by the approaches to the bridges. The scope of the study needs to include the approaches to existing and proposed crossings.

#### 4. Guiding Principles

- a. **Network hierarchy**: Missing from the guiding principles is any recognition that a transportation network has a hierarchy of types of roadways (local, arterial, freeway). Currently one of the main problems with the existing interprovincial network is the lack of such hierarchy (at least on the Ottawa side). Two freeways on the Gatineau side connect and funnel traffic to a bridge but that is then routed into Ottawa onto arterial streets. Ottawa’s downtown streets are clogged with non-local traffic. How does any proposed interprovincial transportation plan intend to provide connectivity such that non-local traffic can be routed away from communities? Thus, a guiding principle for scenario development is to create a consistent hierarchy in the system by considering better connectivity between the 5/50 and 417.
- b. **Requirement for strong demonstration of need**: The creation of major new transportation arteries usually leads to negative externalities on adjacent communities. For this reason, a guiding principle should be that major new transportation networks should have a high hurdle to clear in terms of benefit-cost evaluations.
- c. **High value on natural environment**: The National Capital Region is a particularly strong example of the situation where a compelling case (high hurdle to clear) is required. The NCR is unique in that most of the shoreline on both sides of the Ottawa River are green space and undeveloped with high recreational usage and/or ecological value. Impacting this status quo should require very compelling evidence of need and benefit to cost ratios.
- d. **Goods movement vs people movement**: A guiding principle could be one that recognizes that there are many ways to facilitate the movement of more people across the river (or reduce the peak demand for people to move across the river) whereas there are much more limited options for facilitating improved goods movement without negatively impacting communities. This should be given more recognition in the guiding principles.
- e. **A guiding principle should be that non-local heavy truck traffic should not be funneled through residential communities**

#### 5. Evaluation Criteria

- a. In the evaluation criteria table the notion of improving quality of life in the communities impacted by interprovincial transportation networks gets only a passing reference in the very last of all of the listed evaluation criteria. In contrast, easier mobility features in almost all of the rest (8-9 criteria). The impacts on communities deserve a fair weighting in the evaluation process. An imperative to not negatively impact neighbourhoods with



non-local heavy truck traffic must be included in the evaluation criteria. It is not sufficient to simply imply it as one of several elements that could be generally covered by a phrase such as "community cohesion and health and safety are improved"

- b. Protection and celebration of the Region's nature. Although this gets a reference under one of the pillars of the guiding principles, in the Evaluation Criteria column there is no criterion listed which would take into account impacts on this natural environment. One should be added.
- c. One of the evaluation criteria is that "community unity, health, safety are improved". A more specific criterion should be added that makes reference to enabling communities to achieve the goals envisaged for them in their respective cities' official plans, e.g. to attract intensification and to become 15 minute neighbourhoods, and that the majority of trips are made by sustainable modes.
- d. Choosing Sustainable Modes: This wording should be strengthened to "people increasingly choose sustainable modes"

Truck traffic. There is an evaluation criterion that states: "Transit trips across the river are faster and more reliable". This is crisp and can be evaluated. Similarly, under "Quality of Life" there should be an evaluation criterion such as "Through trucks are removed from local neighbourhoods". Potential scenarios need to be evaluated against their performance in addressing this.



December 17, 2021

Marc Seaman  
Chair, Board of Directors  
National Capital Commission  
Ste. 202, 40 Elgin St.  
Ottawa ON K1P 1C7

Dear Mr. Seaman:

**Re. NCC Interprovincial Crossing Study**

I am writing on behalf of the Federation of Citizens Associations (FCA), which represents 73 community groups in the City of Ottawa. Last month representatives of the FCA participated in a stakeholders meeting conducted by the IBI Group, the consultant for the NCC's Interprovincial Crossing Study, on the findings of that study. Unfortunately the public comment period regarding this study closed at the end of November – we are writing to you as we understand the NCC Board of Directors will be considering the NCC Interprovincial Crossing Study at its January 2022 meeting, and we wish to express our concerns regarding this study.

We understand that the NCC has been given a mandate from the Federal Government to examine the possibility of a sixth river crossing in the National Capital Region, and can understand the factors leading up to this initiative. However, we are concerned about the use of traffic data used by the IBI Group in assessing the need for a sixth interprovincial crossing, particularly as it is based on 2011 data that pre-dates the COVID pandemic. As you can imagine, the pandemic in Ottawa has had major impacts on work patterns, as most Federal Government employees (and others) work from home, and consequently on traffic patterns in the National Capital Region. We believe it would be an error to rely on the pre-pandemic traffic data in considering the possibility of a sixth interprovincial crossing, and would recommend that decisions in this regard be postponed until the TRANS Committee (of which the NCC is a member) Origin-Destination traffic study scheduled for the fall of 2022 is completed. That Origin-Destination study (a significant input to the City of Ottawa's Transportation Master Plan, among others) should be able to provide a better picture of the interprovincial travel needs in the National Capital Region.

Our other concern relates to the issue of truck travel in the National Capital Region. As you may be aware, the bulk of interprovincial truck traffic in the National Capital Region goes through Ottawa's downtown in order to access the McDonald-Cartier Interprovincial Bridge. This has long been identified as a hazardous route, resulting in numerous (and well-documented) collisions and deaths along this route over the years.

We were disappointed in the NCC Interprovincial Crossing Study lack of substantial solutions to deal with this long-standing problem. We would urge that, in proceeding to any next steps in this interprovincial crossing study process, the NCC ensure that adequate resources be devoted to examining and developing substantial solutions to interprovincial truck traffic in the National Capital Region that would protect citizens from cut-through truck traffic, whether it be in Ottawa's downtown or elsewhere. We see no virtue in simply transferring the problem from one neighbourhood to another.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns regarding the NCC Interprovincial Crossing Study.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Cullen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alex Cullen  
President, FCA

Cc     Members of the Board of Directors, NCC  
       Tobi Nussbaum, CEO, NCC