

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

*A Strategic Plan for Interprovincial Crossings  
and Sustainable Transportation  
for the National Capital Region*

**November 2025**



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Canada



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Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan  
for Canada's Capital Region

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The Strategic Plan informs interprovincial decisions about interprovincial travel in ways that are sustainable, equitable and environmentally sensitive and that work towards creating a more liveable and prosperous region.

# Executive Summary

The National Capital Commission (NCC) Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region: A Strategic Plan for Interprovincial Crossings and Sustainable Transportation for the National Capital Region (“the Strategic Plan”) sets out a vision for the interprovincial movement of people and goods in the National Capital Region today and towards 2050. The Strategic Plan informs interprovincial decisions about interprovincial travel in ways that are sustainable, equitable and environmentally sensitive and that work towards creating a more liveable and prosperous region. It includes key directions, strategies and initiatives to assist the region achieve common transportation goals and objectives along with a monitoring framework to measure qualitative and quantitative monitoring indicators and targets over the short, medium and long term.

This Strategic Plan was initially published in 2022 after extensive public and stakeholder consultations and was updated in 2025 with the latest post-pandemic demographic, travel and goods movement data available for the National Capital Region. The update also incorporated initiatives announced since the approval of the previous iteration, including the 2024 Government of Canada decision on a new interprovincial crossing along the Montée-Paiement and Aviation Parkway corridor, coupled with updated strategies and actions to successfully support these new directions.

## **Key findings of the existing conditions analysis and forecasts include:**

Analysis of interprovincial travel in the National Capital Region indicates that the morning rush hour sees a significantly higher volume of work-related trips from Gatineau to Ottawa than in the opposite direction, with this pattern reversing in the afternoon. This directional imbalance places varying pressure on current crossing infrastructure depending on the time of day, leading to capacity and operational challenges.

Another defining feature of interprovincial travel is the limited geographical distribution of the crossings, with five of the six, including a dedicated link for active transportation, located in the core area. The latest travel data demonstrates that this generates indirect and inefficient travel routes, with tens of thousands of private vehicles passing through, but neither originating nor terminating in, the core area. It also leads to the majority of the commercial truck traffic using the King Edward, Rideau, Waller and Nicholas (KERWN) corridor in Ottawa, contributing to quality-of-life concerns for residents, businesses and visitors.



Future scenario analysis demonstrates that without significant interventions, increased demand for interprovincial travel, associated with a growing population, will exacerbate existing challenges. While opportunities to respond to travel demand by enhancing vehicular capacity in the core area are limited, there are significant opportunities to increase the people-moving capacity of the existing crossings through transit, walking and cycling. In the presence of adequate infrastructure, these modes provide space-effective solutions that are compelling alternatives to low-occupancy vehicles. Indeed, analysis of the Gatineau-Ottawa tram (TramGO) project and a downtown transit loop demonstrate their ability to significantly contribute to meeting the needs of interprovincial travel. Nevertheless, analyses also show that truck traffic will continue to increase by over 50% by 2050, exacerbating existing challenges.



## The Vision for Interprovincial Transportation in 2050

The Strategic Plan vision: By 2050, the transportation network to cross the Ottawa River will provide well-connected and sustainable travel options that contribute to a high quality of life and economic prosperity in the National Capital Region. The system of crossings will support equitable mobility and the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, while respecting the region's natural environment and cultural heritage.

Developed in consultation with regional, municipal, provincial and federal agencies, stakeholders and the public, the vision for the Strategic Plan sets a sustainable path to achieve common goals and objectives under five strategic pillars:

- One Region (Transportation Integration);
- Sustainable Use of Crossing Infrastructure;
- Environment and Climate Change;
- Economy; and
- Quality of Life.

## Testing Plan Directions

Based on existing and anticipated conditions, if current trends hold, the National Capital Region will face significant transportation challenges in 2050 if no action is taken. As a part of the strategic planning process, several scenarios were prepared and tested to compare how different transportation initiatives and investments would impact travel patterns and behaviour in the National Capital Region. These scenarios fell under two broad categories, as originally published in 2022 and subsequently updated and re-analyzed in 2025.

- 1. Making better use of existing crossings:** actions, including enhanced transit service, reconfiguration of existing crossings and strong policies to manage interprovincial travel demand.
- 2. Investing in major infrastructure:** investments in new infrastructure to address 2050 transportation demands, such as new multi-modal crossings of the Ottawa River.

The analysis of these two categories and respective scenarios showed that there are opportunities to make better use of existing crossings by managing current travel demand. Managing demand could include shifting trips to more sustainable modes and enhanced work-from-home and remote workplace strategies. These would provide opportunities to accommodate short-term growth while further studies take place on a new interprovincial infrastructure.

The system of crossings will support equitable mobility and the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, while respecting the region's natural environment and cultural heritage.





## Overall Plan Directions

The following five overall directions were developed based on the testing of various policy and infrastructure scenarios and further refined as part of the 2025 technical update to this Strategic Plan.

1. A flexible framework: Flexible framework to guide interprovincial mobility
2. Better data: Updated data to ensure decisions are fact-based and reflect evolving conditions
3. Regional collaboration: Collaborative and coordinated interprovincial transportation planning and service delivery among the levels of government
4. Leverage opportunities: Leverage emerging trends in technology and travel patterns
5. Sustainability focus: Prioritize sustainable mobility and climate resilience through targeted investments and optimization

These five directions were then applied to the pillars that the Strategic Plan is centred on:

**Moving together as one region:** The National Capital Region includes several municipalities and two provinces. Meeting future interprovincial travel needs will require continued collaboration and shared decision-making.

**Encouraging sustainable mobility:** An important part of sustainable mobility is efficiently moving people and goods on the existing crossings by foot, bike or transit using zero or minimal emissions. This involves offering comfortable and convenient transportation choices that are competitive with personal vehicles.

**Protecting the environment:** Transportation is a large source of greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants; reducing these emissions, including overall automobile dependency, and implementing climate change resiliency into designs are large parts of achieving climate change goals.

**Supporting economic prosperity:** The interprovincial crossings play a vital role for travel within the region and, more broadly, connecting the provincial and national highway networks.

**Improving quality of life:** The transportation system plays an important part in maintaining and enhancing quality of life in the National Capital Region by providing reliable and safe travel options, as well as managing impacts caused by transportation, including provision of accessible and reliable transit services and managing heavy truck movements.

The Strategic Plan acknowledges that managing interprovincial travel is one element of the larger regional mobility network that would benefit from more regional coordination and collaboration.

## The Strategic Framework

This Strategic Plan categorizes leading initiatives by the following three broad timelines that phase the collective efforts towards achieving the shared vision.

- **Short term/bold starts (immediate to five-year horizon):** represents immediate strategies and quick wins that have a very strong potential to move towards achieving goals and objectives.
- **Medium term/initiating change (five-to-10-year horizon):** represents strategies that can be taken in the near term that can play a greater role in shifting interprovincial travel behaviour.
- **Long term/sustaining progress (beyond 10 years):** represents longer-term strategies where implementation requires further study or where the action may be influenced by the performance of others pursued under bold starts or initiating change.

## Governance

As the National Capital Region continues to grow, a more formalized governance for regional and interprovincial transportation planning and investment should be considered to support enhanced collaboration, coordination and cooperation. Although this Strategic Plan does not recommend a model for governance for interprovincial travel or regional transportation in the National Capital Region, it does lay initial groundwork by establishing a common vision and objectives, assessing the general needs and gaps, continuing conversations between National Capital Region agencies and outlining potential governance models. Towards this effort, the Strategic Plan acknowledges that managing interprovincial travel is one element of the larger regional mobility network that would benefit from more regional coordination and collaboration.



## Monitoring Framework

Given that the Strategic Plan is intended to be a flexible living plan, systematic monitoring of progress towards the vision and goals is important for informing future updates. This Strategic Plan draws on existing approved multi-jurisdictional plans and documents, many of which include quantifiable objectives for similar broad goals. These have been integrated into the objectives of this Strategic Plan and further refined as part of the 2025 technical update. Towards this effort, two quantitative approaches for monitoring have been developed as part of this Strategic Plan to be further reviewed and refined over time using the most up-to-date information.

- **Forecasting indicators:** These indicators were used to evaluate the 2050 scenarios during the Strategic Plan development process.
- **Monitoring indicators:** These indicators are intended to provide present-day snapshots of progress towards the vision and provide an indication of how implemented strategies are working.

The National Capital Commission (NCC) acknowledges that the National Capital Region, in which it carries out its mandate, is situated on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation. The NCC recognizes the important place that the Algonquin Nation has had in the past and will continue to have in the future of the Capital. The NCC values Indigenous heritage and knowledge and commits to continue working collaboratively with local Indigenous leaders and peoples to build a sustainable Capital Region.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The Strategic Plan

The National Capital Commission's Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan for the National Capital Region: A Strategic Plan for Interprovincial Crossings and Sustainable Transportation in the National Capital Region (the Strategic Plan) sets out a vision and strategies for the interprovincial movement of goods and people in phases towards 2050. The Strategic Plan supports the continued successes of the region while promoting the unique cultural, recreational and symbolic role of the National Capital Region.

The NCC has a mandate from the federal government to develop the Strategic Plan in collaboration with provincial and municipal governments, including:

- Ministry of Transportation of Ontario;
- Ministère des Transports et de la Mobilité durable du Québec;
- City of Ottawa, including OC Transpo;
- Ville de Gatineau; and
- Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO).

The Strategic Plan was first published in 2022 after extensive collaboration with the above agencies and was revised in 2025 with the most up-to-date land-use, personal travel and goods movement data available for the National Capital Region.

## 1.2 The National Capital Commission and National Capital Region

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is a federal Crown corporation with a broad mandate to build a dynamic and inspiring capital that is a source of pride and unity for Canadians and a legacy for future generations. The NCC fulfills this mandate through its roles as the long-term planner of federal lands, principal steward of nationally significant public spaces and creative partner for development and conservation.

The National Capital Region is a rapidly growing area located on both sides of the Ottawa River. It includes the cities of Ottawa (Ontario) and Gatineau (Quebec) and the surrounding rural municipalities. There are eight active interprovincial crossings between Ontario and Quebec in the National Capital Region: six bridges and two ferries. The region is set to grow significantly between now and 2050. The NCC has been mandated to prepare this Strategic Plan that identifies strategies and supporting policies for the interprovincial movement of people and goods in ways that are sustainable and equitable, and that support a more liveable and prosperous region.

The National Capital Commission is a federal Crown corporation with a broad mandate to build a dynamic and inspiring capital that is a source of pride and unity for Canadians and a legacy for future generations.

## 1.3 The Process: How We Got Here

The Strategic Plan was first developed in four phases, starting in spring 2020 and ending in winter 2022 (Figure 1-1). A fifth phase, the technical update, was completed in November 2025. The update leveraged recent population and employment projections from regional partners, new travel data on how travel behaviour has shifted following the COVID-19 pandemic, and updated networks information such as roadway lane arrangements and transit routes and frequencies.

**Figure 1-1: The Strategic Plan Development Process**

Phase 1 <b>Assess Needs and Opportunities</b>	Spring 2020	Identified existing plans and policies of local agencies and reviewed existing travel patterns and forecasts to identify needs and opportunities.
Phase 2 <b>Establish Vision and Goals</b>	Summer 2020 / Fall 2020	Established a vision, supporting goals and objectives to guide scenario development in Phase 3 and the final Strategic Plan development in Phase 4.
Phase 3 <b>Develop and Evaluate Future Scenarios</b>	Winter 2020 / Spring 2021	Developed and evaluated a series of conceptual scenarios to identify potential solutions to achieve the vision.
Phase 4 <b>Develop the Strategic Plan</b>	Summer 2021 / Winter 2022	Identified a series of potential short- and long-term strategies to achieve the vision and a monitoring framework to measure progress towards the vision.
Phase 5 <b>Technical Update to the Strategic Plan</b>	Fall 2023 / Fall 2025	Undertook a technical update using updated data and analytical tools using 2022 household survey data, 2023 truck data, and supporting data on traffic and transit flows, land use, and socioeconomic characteristics of the population.

## 1.4 Analytical Tools

This Strategic Plan and its 2025 technical update used the most up-to-date data for demographic and employment forecasts and regional transportation travel projections. Utilizing the most current data and information was a critical component for the 2025 update given recent travel trends associated with the post-COVID pandemic recovery period and new office policies and norms in the National Capital Region that affect travel patterns.

The key data sources that have been incorporated into this Strategic Plan include the 2022 TRANS origin-destination survey, 2023 NCC truck mobility data, and traffic counts collected between 2019 and 2024. Population and employment data for 2046 were compiled by the TRANS Committee, which includes members from the NCC, both provinces, cities, and transit agencies in the National Capital Region. The 2046 population and employment numbers were scaled up to 2050 for this study. The primary analytical tool used for this Strategic Plan analysis was the regional EMME travel demand model.

The feedback from these various groups demonstrated strong support for the vision, goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Key priorities, needs and desires for these groups were also identified.

## Updates to the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is a “living document” that will be updated as conditions evolve over time.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant change, with impacts on health, economy, environment and society.

The Strategic Plan draws on regional travel data from 2022–2024 to consider how the region has adjusted following the pandemic and estimates how it will continue to evolve into the future.

The feedback from these various groups demonstrated strong support for the vision, goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Key priorities, needs and desires for these groups were also identified.

## 1.5 What We Heard

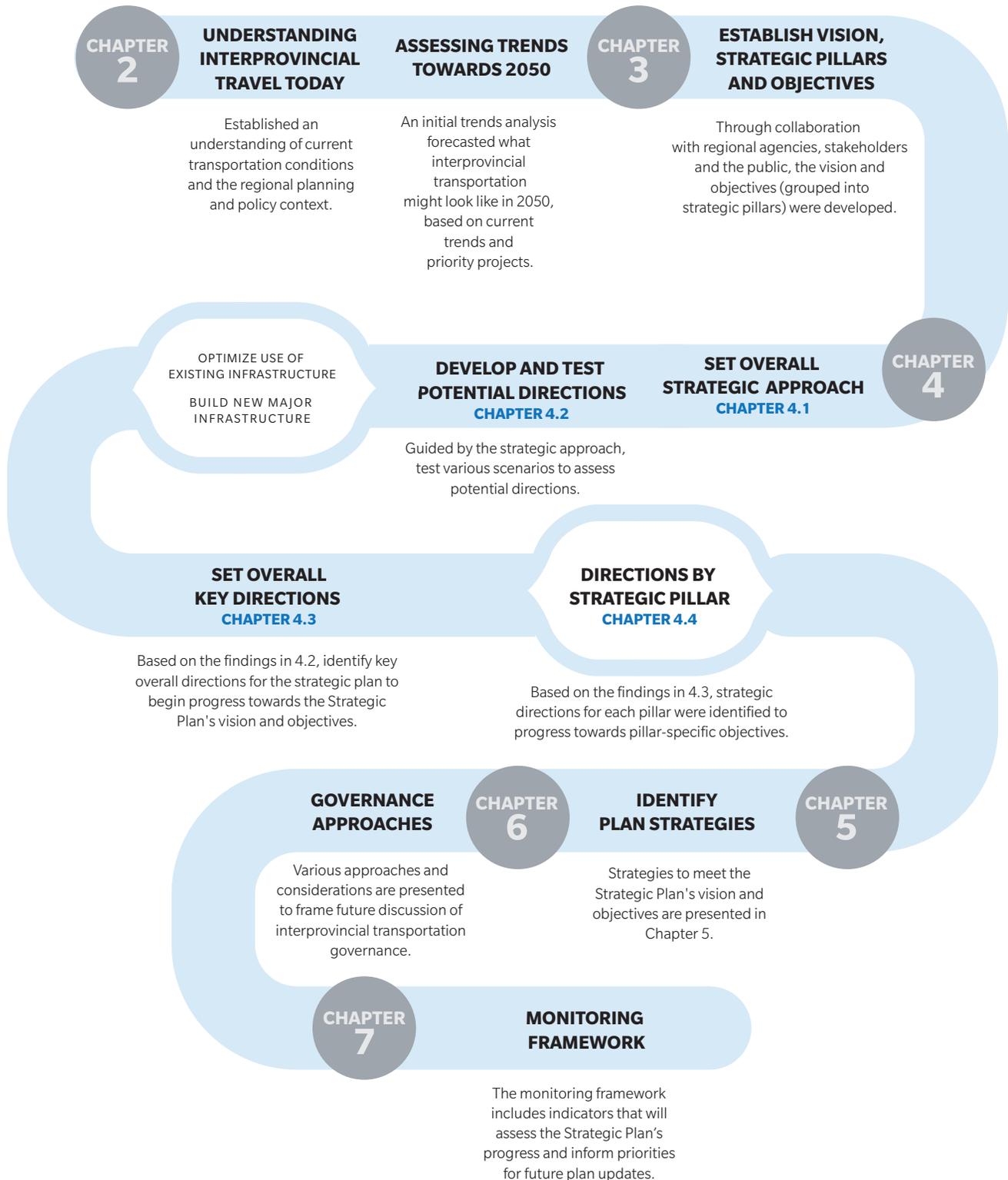
Consultation was an important part of the Strategic Plan. A range of engagement strategies were used to reach members of the public, associations and businesses, in addition to extensive consultation with other federal, provincial and municipal partners and regional transit operators in the National Capital Region. The feedback from these various groups demonstrated strong support for the vision, goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Key priorities, needs and desires for these groups were also identified. These were then used to focus the Strategic Plan to support local community needs.

### **Key issues identified include the need to:**

- manage the impact of interprovincial truck traffic on neighbourhoods and communities;
- protect the environment and reduce climate change impacts;
- consider all modes, including sustainable modes and personal vehicles; and
- look at interprovincial transportation as an integrated system that includes more than just the crossings.

# 1.6 How to Read the Strategic Plan

Figure 1-2: Strategic Plan Structure





## 2 The National Capital Region: Today and Towards 2050

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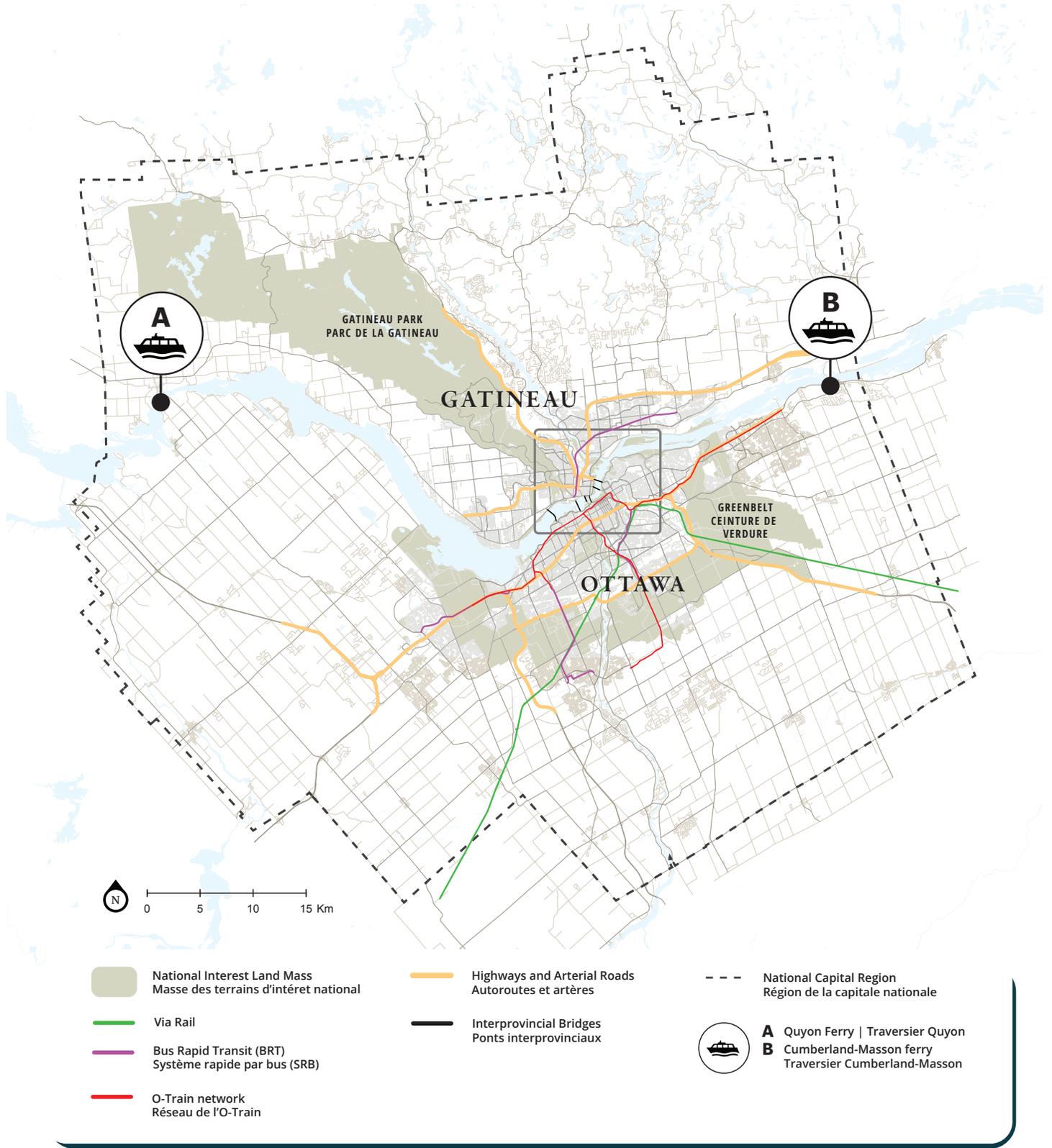
The National Capital Region is set to experience significant growth between now and 2050 with a population increase of approximately 36% along with 26% more jobs. More people and jobs in denser areas presents opportunities to be harnessed and demands to be managed.

### 2.1 National Capital Region Today

The National Capital Region covers an area of 4,715 km<sup>2</sup>. It straddles the Ottawa River and includes the cities of Ottawa (Ontario) and Gatineau (Quebec), as well as surrounding rural municipalities. Provincial transportation is under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ministère des Transports et de la Mobilité durable du Québec (MTMD). In 2022, the National Capital Region was home to approximately 1,408,000 people and 755,000 jobs. The interprovincial crossing system in the National Capital Region includes two ferry crossings and six bridges.

The two main transit agencies in the National Capital Region are OC Transpo (Ottawa) and the Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO, Gatineau). OC Transpo currently provides two conventional transit routes that cross the interprovincial bridges, while the STO has more than 30 routes. Rural transit services in the Outaouais are provided by Transcollines, while rural municipal transit services in the Ottawa area are provided by private services. Both Gatineau and Ottawa have downtown cores that are well served by rapid transit and both have plans to extend their respective rapid transit networks. While the two rapid transit infrastructure do not currently physically connect across the Ottawa River, in 2024, the STO initiated the design process for their TramGO project that includes improved interprovincial connections. The National Capital Region also includes a robust cycling network, particularly in the downtown core. This includes both shared and separated paths and reflects Ottawa and Gatineau's commitment to increasing the number of people who travel by bike.

Figure 2-1: National Capital Region and Key Transportation Network





## 2.2 Land Use Planning (Roles and Responsibilities)

The roles and responsibilities for land use planning throughout the National Capital Region are complex due to the involvement of multiple levels of government: the federal government and the provincial and municipal governments. In addition, the NCC has a planning mandate established under the *National Capital Act* that states that the NCC is responsible to:

“prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance.”

The *National Capital Act* authorizes the NCC to construct infrastructure, engage in joint projects with local municipalities and authorities, maintain property, preserve historic places and conduct research related to planning in the National Capital Region. The NCC’s planning framework requires all individuals and federal organizations to get NCC approval before undertaking projects on federal lands or in federal buildings in the National Capital Region.

## Overarching Foundational Documents and Initiatives

The Strategic Plan draws on a wide range of existing plans, documents and initiatives at various government levels. This is to ensure that the Strategic Plan aligns with the goals, objectives and policies of other plans and documents applicable to the National Capital Region. These foundational documents and initiatives include federal, provincial and municipal plans that cover a range of topics, such as land use, zoning, urban design, heritage, Indigenous peoples, environment and transportation among others. Key plans and initiatives are listed below.



The *National Capital Act* authorizes the NCC to construct infrastructure, engage in joint projects with local municipalities and authorities, maintain property, preserve historic places and conduct research related to planning in the National Capital Region.

Plan for Canada's Capital (2017–2067) defines an overarching vision and strategic planning direction for the entire Capital Region over a 50-year time horizon.

### **Federal government and the National Capital Commission**

- Following a decision by the Government of Canada in 2024, additional studies were initiated for a new interprovincial crossing along the Montée-Paiement and Aviation Parkway corridor.
- The Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project is at the concept design stage, with construction planned to begin in 2028. The new structure is being designed to accommodate all modes of transportation, including a future conversion for tram vehicles.
- The NCC transit office was established in 2021 to support the STO's TramGO project. As part of the 2024 Fall Economic Statement, the Government of Canada announced a commitment to the next phase of planning and design for the project.
- National Capital Core Area Plan (2025) is the NCC's primary land-use policy guiding federal lands in downtown Ottawa and Gatineau.
- Plan for Canada's Capital (2017–2067) defines an overarching vision and strategic planning direction for the entire National Capital Region over a 50-year time horizon.
- Capital Urban Lands Plan (2015) is a land use plan. It provides detailed direction and guidance for the use and stewardship of urban federal lands.
- NCC Sustainable Development Strategy (2023–2027) defines the NCC's role in creating a greener and more sustainable National Capital Region that will thrive for future generations.
- A Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment (SEAA) for this Strategic Plan was completed with a summary appended to this document. It follows the Government of Canada SEAA process introduced in 2024 to evaluate mitigation options for environmental and economic impacts of proposed federal policy.

## Provincial governments

- Preserving and Protecting our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan is intended to provide general guidance and principles to achieve a balance between meeting Canada's 2030 reduction targets under the Paris Agreement and economic prosperity.
- Connecting the East: A draft transportation plan for eastern Ontario (2022) is the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario's 30-year blueprint guiding future highway, transit, active-transportation and goods-movement investments across eastern Ontario.
- *Plan d'action 2013–2020 sur les changements climatiques* presents actions required in all the sectors of the economy to reach the objective of reducing Quebec's greenhouse gas emissions to 20% below the 1990 greenhouse gas emissions levels by 2020.
- *Politique de mobilité durable du Québec - La mobilité durable : Transporter le Québec vers la modernité (2018)* includes sustainable mobility policies, actions and monitoring for the sustainable movement of people and goods to the year 2030.

## Municipal governments

- City of Ottawa's Official Plan (2022) provides a vision for the future growth of the city and a policy framework to guide the city's physical development to the year 2046 and seeks to set the stage for the city to reach a population of two million.
- Ville de Gatineau's *Schéma d'aménagement et de développement révisé (2015)* provides a direction that reflects the planning orientations, priorities and values of the Ville de Gatineau over the horizon 2016 to 2050 and includes the action to work with regional partners to maintain some freight transportation on the KERWN corridor in Ottawa in the event of a bridge being built in the eastern part of the region.
- City of Ottawa's Transportation Master Plan (TMP 2025) provides mobility policy directions and identifies the required mobility infrastructure to support the City's planned growth to the year 2046. It includes the action for the city to work with federal, provincial, municipal and private sector partners in the National Capital Region to provide an appropriate connection for trucks between Highway 417 and Autoroutes 5 and 50.



A study by the STO analyzed the possibilities for improving transit in west Gatineau to support continued residential growth and to mitigate mobility challenges. In 2020, the study confirmed the need for a tram, utilizing the Portage Bridge to reach Ottawa.

## 2.3 Key Existing Mobility Targets

The Strategic Plan draws on existing approved multi-jurisdictional plans and documents, many of which include targets that set quantifiable objectives for similar broad goals.

These targets have been integrated into the objectives of the Strategic Plan and will also inform the monitoring framework. As the Strategic Plan is updated, additional targets can be developed using the latest information to develop targets that are bold yet achievable based on the Strategic Plan's strategies.

The following existing approved municipal and federal targets are among the most significant in the existing plans. Achieving these targets would represent substantial progress towards achieving the Strategic Plan's vision.

- **Increase sustainable mode share:** Gatineau and Ottawa have municipal city-wide targets for increasing the proportion of all trips made by carpool, transit, cycling and walking to 54% by 2031 and 50% by 2046, respectively.
- **Reduce total interprovincial auto trips:** Gatineau and Ottawa have targets of reducing their auto mode share by 4% by 2031 and 6.6% by 2046, respectively. This requires measures to increase mobility options, including for interprovincial travel.
- **Achieve net-zero emissions for interprovincial travel:** The federal government is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Strategic Plan assumes an uptake of electric vehicles based on policies and infrastructure improvements led by all levels of government.

## Previous Interprovincial Transportation Planning and Related Studies

- **Strategic Transportation Initiative for Canada's Capital Region (2005):** Outlined the mandate, strategies and actions for the NCC's role in the planning and implementation of transportation infrastructure supporting the National Capital Region.
- **Interprovincial Crossings Environmental Assessment Study Transportation Reports (2013, 2020, 2024):** The NCC, in partnership with the MTO and the MTMD and in cooperation with the two municipalities, initiated the Interprovincial Crossings Environmental Assessment Study in 2006. The multi-phased study examined "reasonable options to improve interprovincial transportation capacity across the Ottawa River to address long-term needs." Although the study was terminated in 2013 due to a lack of consensus among the study partners, the Government of Canada subsequently initiated refresh studies that were completed in 2020 and 2024 and has since committed to further planning and design for the Montée Paiement-Aviation Parkway corridor.
- **Interprovincial Transit Strategy for Canada's Capital Region (2013):** This was a collaborative effort between the City of Ottawa, the Ville de Gatineau, the STO and the NCC. The strategy recommended policies and measures moving towards a seamless interprovincial transit system.
- **City of Ottawa: Downtown Ottawa (Truck) Tunnel Feasibility Study (2016):** This feasibility study by the City of Ottawa was in response to the critical concerns regarding truck traffic between Highway 417 and the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge. The tunnel would provide a diversion route for heavy trucks from the surface road network.
- **Public Transit System for Gatineau's West End—Complementary Study (2021):** This study by the STO analyzed the possibilities for improving transit in West Gatineau to support continued residential growth and to mitigate mobility challenges. In 2020, the study confirmed the need for a tram, utilizing the Portage Bridge to reach Ottawa. In 2024, the Government of Canada approved funding to advance planning, design and approvals for the project, with service anticipated to begin in 2035.

The National Capital Region is the centre of federal government activity, and this area has a higher number of public administration jobs than the national average.

## 2.4 Population and Employment in the National Capital Region

The City of Ottawa (“Ottawa”) in Ontario and Ville de Gatineau (“Gatineau”) and Les Collines-de-l’Outaouais Regional County Municipality (“Les Collines-de-l’Outaouais”) in Quebec are the three key municipalities in the National Capital Region. The population in these three municipalities has increased 48% overall between 1996 and 2022 at an average annual growth rate of 1.5%.

In Gatineau, employment is concentrated in the central Hull sector with some employment north on Autoroute 5 and east on Autoroute 50. On the Ottawa side, there is a strong concentration of employment downtown near the bridges (similar to Gatineau), but there are other hubs of employment in the city, some adjacent to major transit stations.

In 2022, there were approximately 755,000 jobs in the National Capital Region, with most of them located in Ottawa (86%). The uneven distribution of jobs means that a greater proportion of workers travel across the river from Gatineau and Les Collines-de-l’Outaouais to access jobs than in the opposite direction.

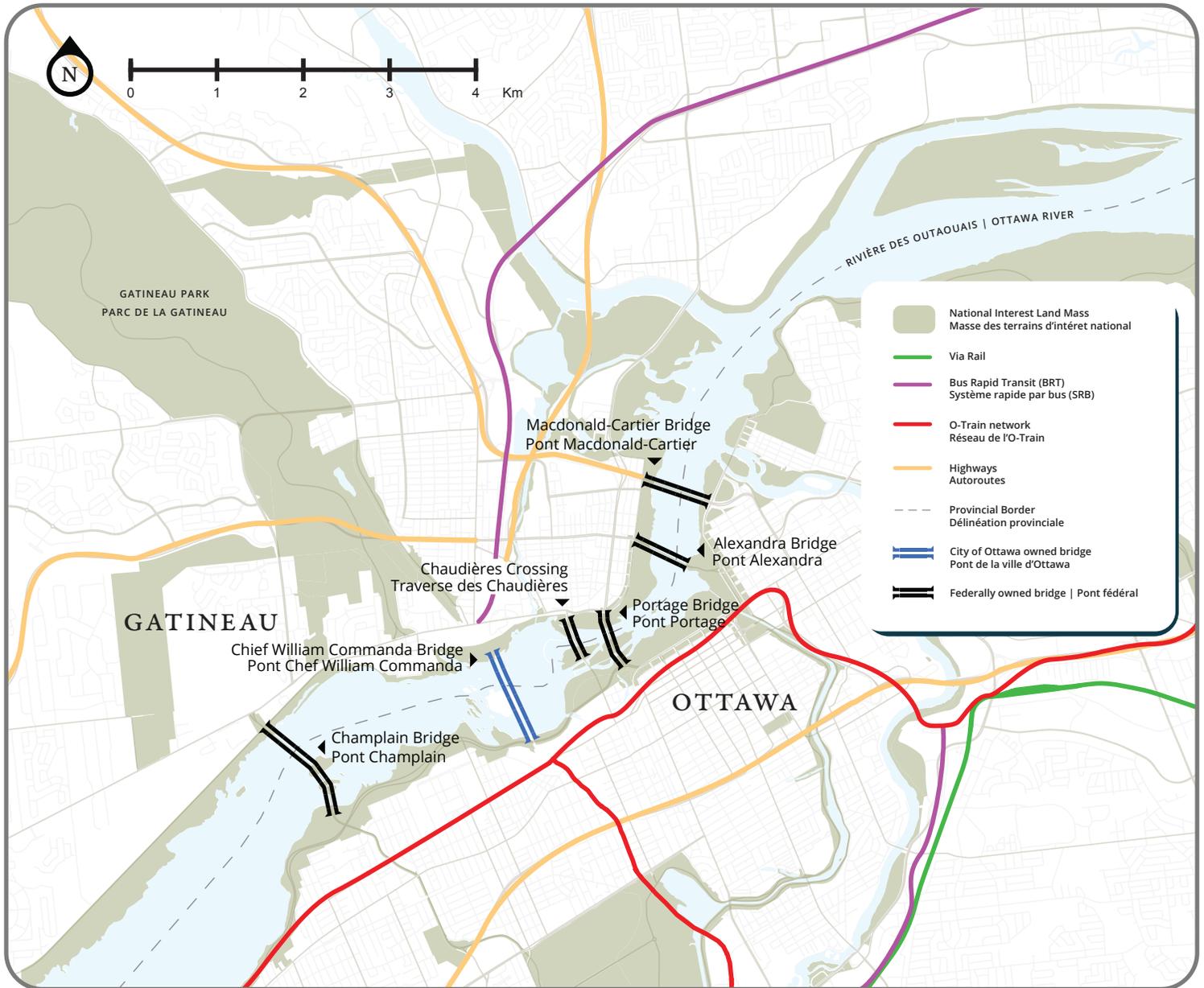
A wide range of industries are represented in the National Capital Region. The National Capital Region is the centre of federal government activity, and this area has a higher number of public administration jobs than the national average. There are 193,000 public administration jobs, representing almost one-quarter of jobs for the entire area. In this growing region, construction employment has many jobs, especially in the fast-growing municipality of Les Collines-de-l’Outaouais. The National Capital Region has a strong professional, scientific and technical services focus, most of it located in Ottawa. The National Capital Region has a reduced focus on manufacturing, primary industries and wholesale trade compared to the rest of Canada. These types of industries rely heavily on the movement of goods and benefit greatly from strong inter-regional connectivity, which are both constrained in the National Capital Region.

## 2.5 Existing Interprovincial Crossings

There are eight existing interprovincial crossings in the National Capital Region: six bridges and two ferries, as shown in Figure 2-2 and summarized in Figure 2-3.

The newest crossing, the Chief William Commanda Bridge, was a former unused heavy rail bridge that was rehabilitated and opened for active mobility in 2023. This new active-use-only interprovincial bridge connects important federal lands of national interest on both sides of the Ottawa River with key connections to the Capital Pathway network and municipal rapid transit systems. While the Chief William Commanda Bridge is closed during winter months, it is well used at other times and has quickly become a key interprovincial crossing that exemplifies the vision and guiding principles of this Strategic Plan.

Figure 2-2: Existing Interprovincial Bridges



In 2022, there were approximately 193,000 public administration jobs in the National Capital Region, representing almost one-quarter of all jobs in the region.

The Chief William Commanda Bridge was a former unused heavy rail bridge that was refurbished and opened for active mobility in 2023. It is well used and exemplifies the vision and guiding principles of this Strategic Plan.

Figure 2-3: Interprovincial Bridges: Key Facts<sup>1, 2</sup>

	Champlain Bridge	Chief William Commanda Bridge	Chaudières Crossing	Portage Bridge	Alexandra Bridge	Macdonald-Cartier Bridge
<b>Construction date</b>	1924-1928	1880 (reopened for active use only in 2023)	1919	1973	1898-1900	1963-1965
<b>Length</b>	1.1 km	980 m	-	700 m	563 m	618 m
<b>Ownership</b>	NCC	City of Ottawa	PSPC*	NCC	PSPC	PSPC
<b>Structure type</b>	Concrete girder bridge	Steel truss bridge	Steel truss bridge	Girder bridge	Steel truss cantilever bridge	Continuous steel box girder bridge
<b>Walking and cycling linfastructure</b>	Sidewalk: east side; Unidirectional painted bike lanes on paved road shoulders	Multi-use path	Physically separated sidewalk: east side; Unidirectional painted bike lanes on road shoulders	Sidewalks: both sides; Bidirectional physically separated cycle track: east side	Wooden-plank pedestrian access added in 1950; now split into pedestrian path and directional cycle lanes	Physically separated multi-use path: both sides
<b>Daily walking and cycling volumes<sup>2,3,4</sup></b>	600	2,150	1,700	2,200	4,000	800
<b>General-purpose lanes</b>	2	-	2	4	2	6
<b>High-occupancy vehicle (HOV)/ transit lanes</b>	1 (central lane in peak travel direction)	-	-	2	-	-
<b>Theoretical roadway capacity (vehicles/hour)</b>	1,200 per direction +1,200 HOVs in peak direction	-	800 per direction	2,100 per direction	600 per direction	3,800 per direction
<b>Transit service</b>	STO	-	OC Transpo	OC Transpo STO	none	STO
<b>Daily truck volumes<sup>2,3</sup></b>	Trucks prohibited (100 despite restrictions)	-	400 Seasonal restrictions on heavy trucks	Restricted (250 despite restrictions)	Restricted (50 despite restrictions)	2,500 Full load allowance
<b>Daily auto and light truck volumes<sup>2,3</sup></b>	36,500	-	14,500	34,900	12,400	74,800
<b>AM (PM) peak hour vehicles towards Ontario<sup>2,4</sup></b>	2,240 vehicles per hour (vph)	N/A	830 vph (720 vph)	1,530 vph (1250 vph)	280 vph (650 vph)	3,820 vph (2080 vph)
<b>AM (PM) peak hour vehicles towards Quebec<sup>2,4</sup></b>	560 vph (2,070 vph)	N/A	490 vph (530 vph)	1,370 vph (2340 vph)	670 vph (580 vph)	1,710 vph (4020 vph)

**Notes:**

1. There are also two ferry crossings at the eastern and western edges of the National Capital Region.
  2. Source: Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC): Interprovincial Bridge Project, 2025.
  3. Counts represent a 24-hour average between May and October in both 2024 and 2025.
  4. All counts are based on an average of weekday counts, conducted one to two times a month over a multi-year period.
- \* Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC)



## 2.6 Interprovincial Travel Today in the National Capital Region

Interprovincial trips represent approximately 6% of all travel in the National Capital Region during the morning and afternoon peak commuter times, with most trips (80%) being work-related.

In 2022, there were approximately 162,000 daily interprovincial trips in the National Capital Region, with approximately half occurring during the morning and afternoon peak commuting times. This represents a 21% decrease in daily interprovincial trips and a 25% decrease in peak period trips compared to 2011, primarily attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, recent traffic counts suggest overall traffic volumes have steadily returned, and all the interprovincial bridges currently operate at or above their theoretical design capacities during peak times.

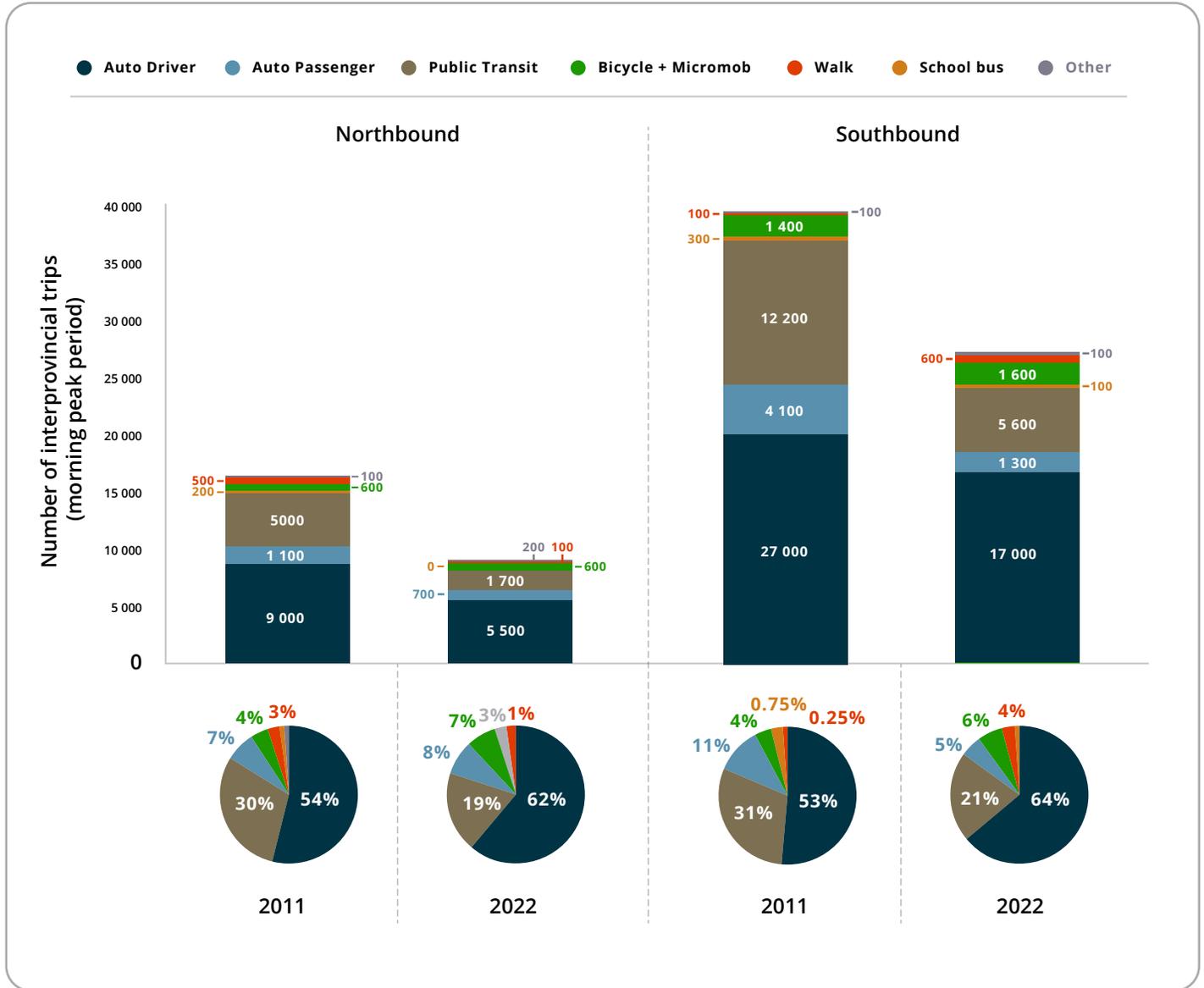
Notably, 75% of interprovincial trips in the morning are from Quebec to Ontario, while approximately 65% of trips in the afternoon are from Ontario to Quebec. Trips by automobiles, transit, cycling and pedestrians all follow this travel pattern, and this trend is most prominent on the Macdonald-Cartier and Champlain bridges, where there are approximately three times as many trips from Quebec to Ontario in the morning compared to trips in the opposite direction.

Approximately 75% of interprovincial trips in the morning peak hour period are from Quebec to Ontario, while approximately 65% of trips in the afternoon peak hour are from Ontario to Quebec.

Interprovincial trips represent almost 6% of all travel in the National Capital Region during the morning rush hour period, with almost all those trips (80%) being work-related.

## Figure 2-4: Interprovincial Morning Peak Period Trip Volumes and Mode Shares (2011 vs 2022)

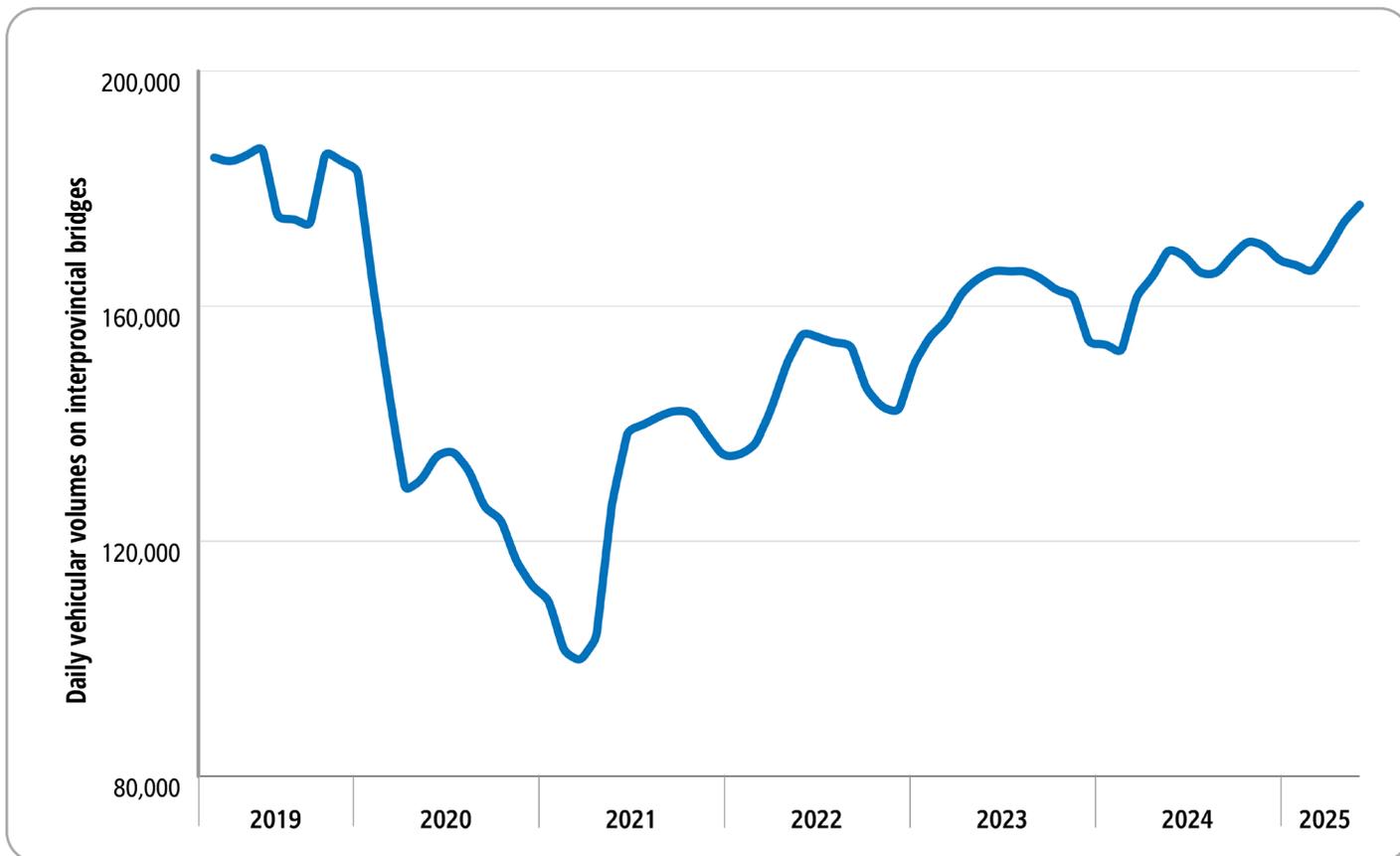
Figure 2-4 shows how travel modes changed during the COVID 19 pandemic, with a notable increase in the proportion of interprovincial trips by private vehicles from 53% to 64% during peak times. This was paired with a similar reduction in transit use and a doubling of bike mode share, with the proportion of walking trips remaining similar to 2011.



Source: Origin-Destination household travel survey, 2022

## Figure 2-5: Daily Interprovincial Traffic Volumes (2019–2025)

Figure 2-5 shows interprovincial traffic volumes have steadily increased since 2019 and have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels in early 2025.



Source: Traffic counts, PSPC

## Figure 2-6: Interprovincial Daily Peak Period Trips Through the Core Area (2022)

Figures 2-6 and 2-7 show how most interprovincial trips (85%) do not begin or end in the core area of the National Capital Region and how the concentration of interprovincial bridges within the core area, coupled with predominately long-distance interprovincial trips, makes sustainable travel options such as walking, biking and transit less competitive. As a result, private vehicles represented 64% of interprovincial trips in 2022, contributing to all interprovincial vehicular bridges operating at or near their theoretical design capacities, as shown in Figure 2-8.

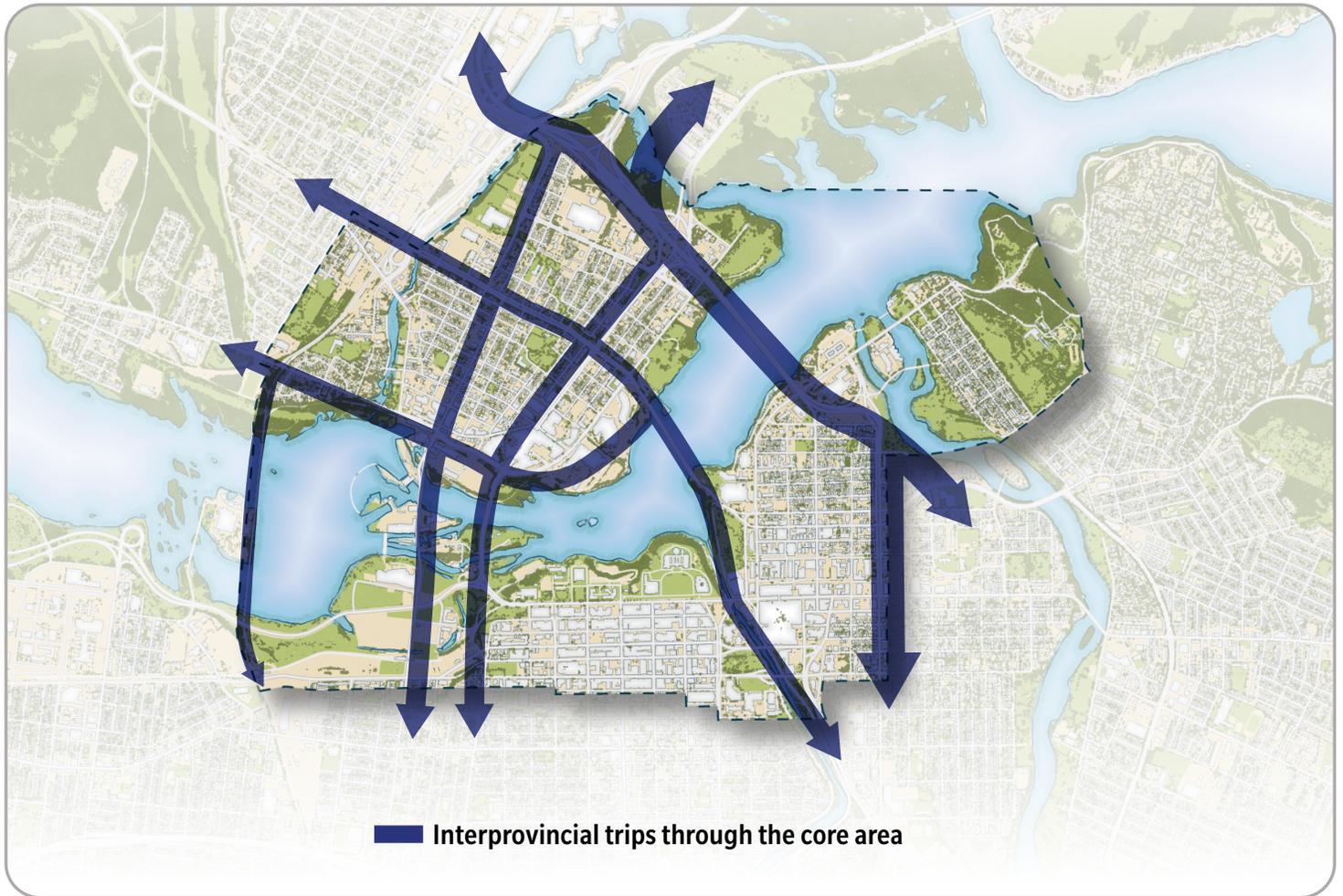


Figure 2-7: Interprovincial Trip Origins and Destinations (2022)

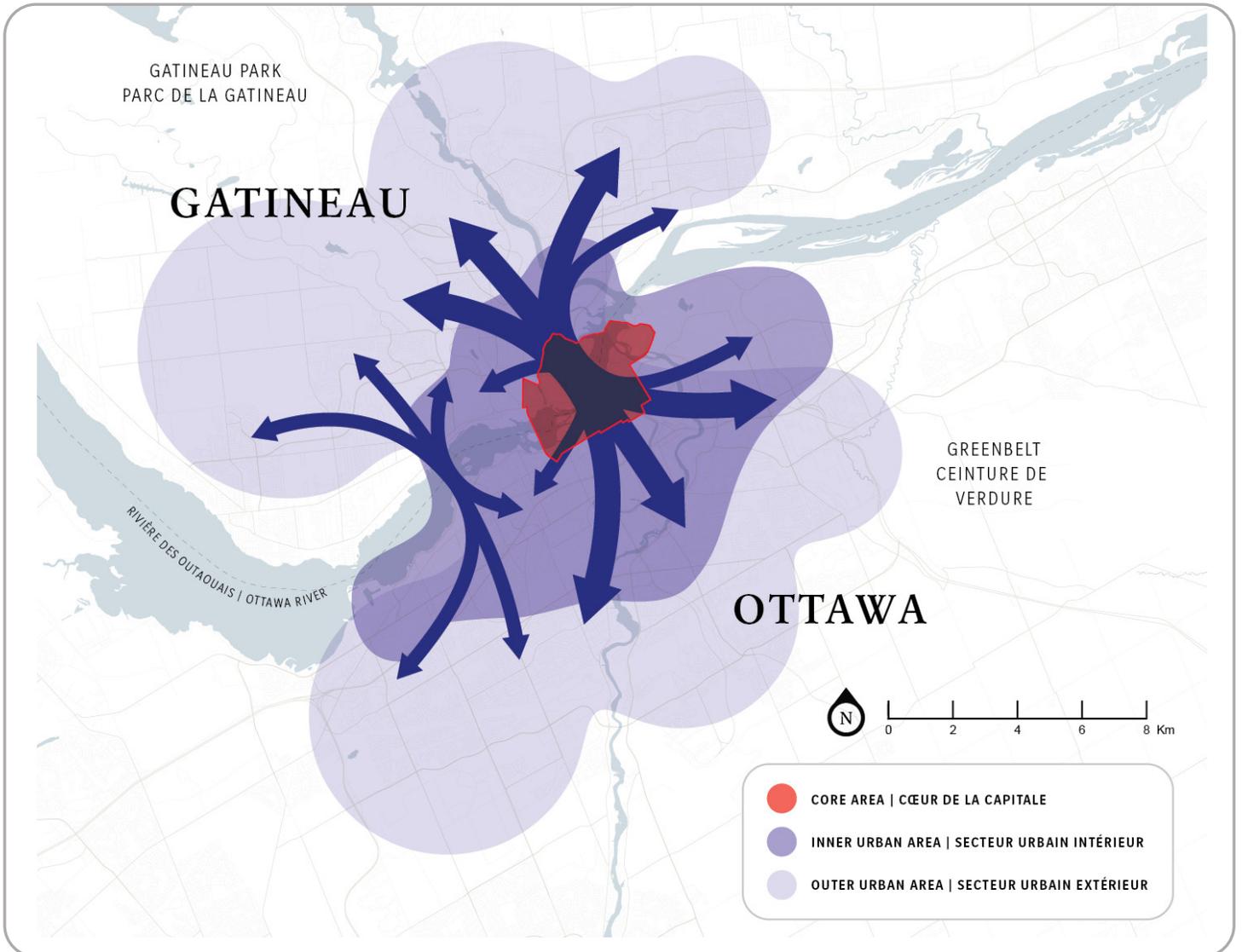
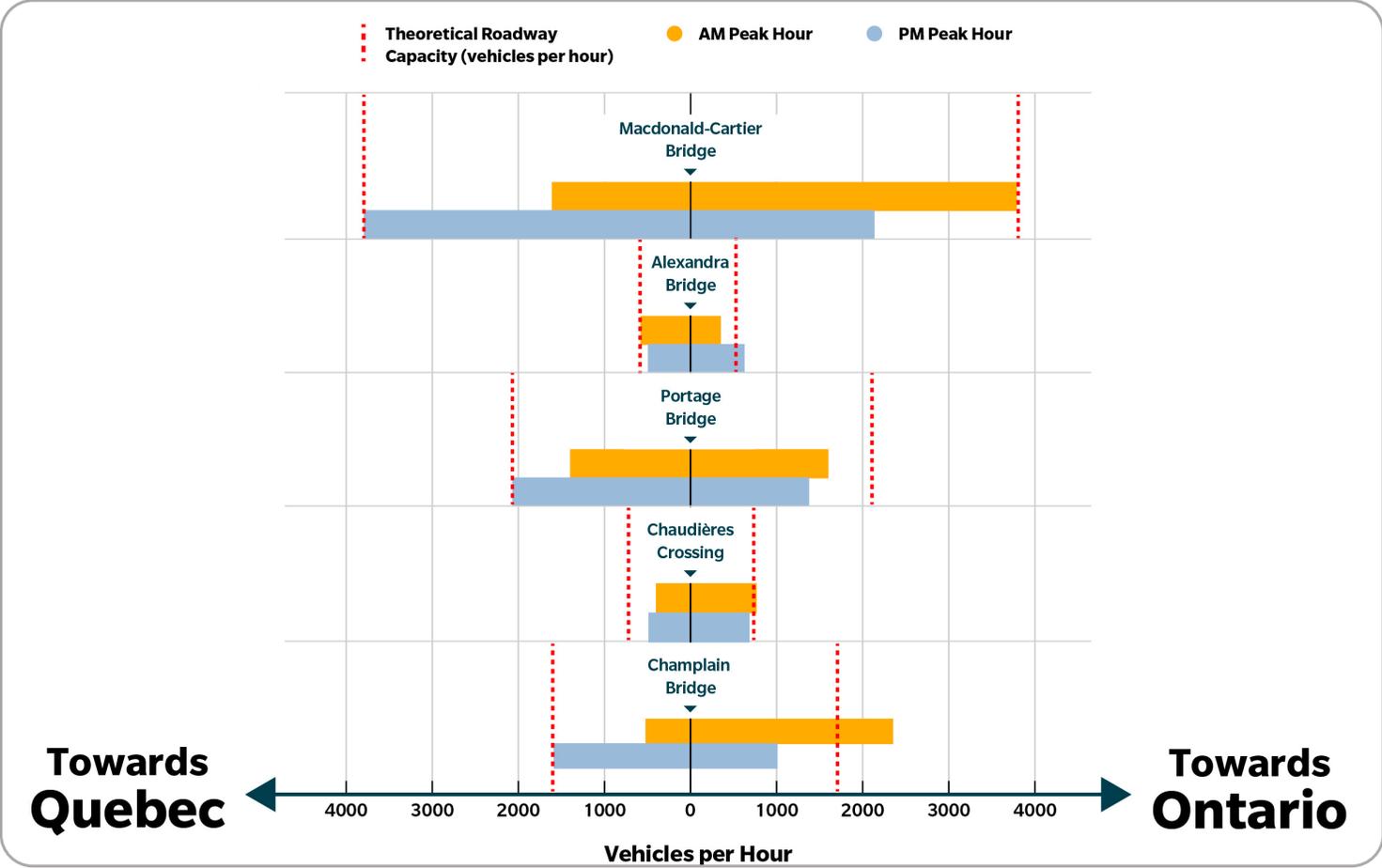


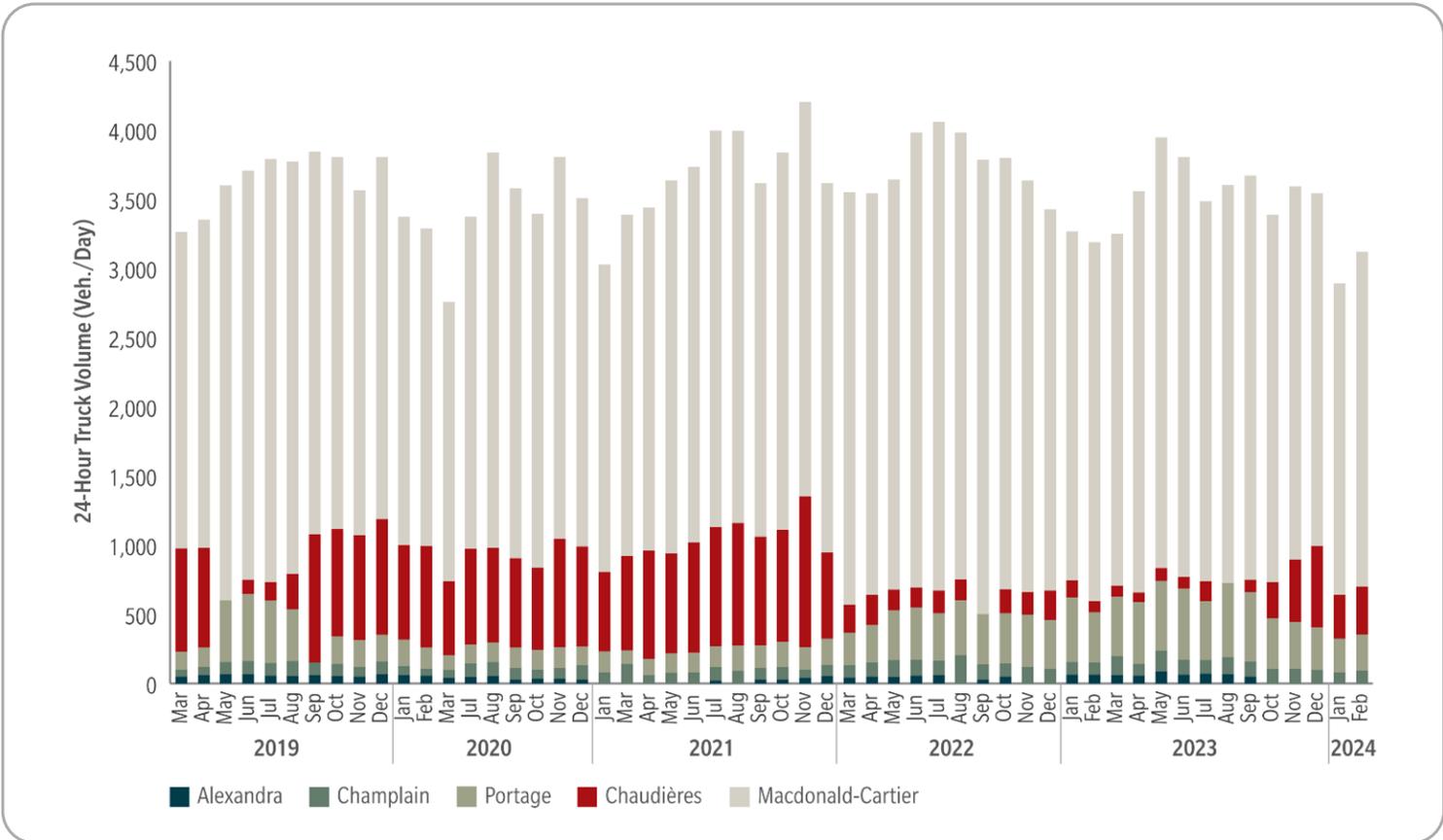
Figure 2-8: Interprovincial Bridge Traffic Volumes (2023–2024)



Source: Traffic counts, PSPC

**Figure 2-9: Interprovincial Bridge Heavy Truck Volumes<sup>1, 2</sup>**

Interprovincial goods movement in the National Capital Region is accommodated on the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge and the Chaudières Crossing. The total daily interprovincial heavy and articulated truck volumes have remained constant over the last several years at approximately 4,000 per day, as shown in Figure 2-9. While the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge directly connects to the Quebec provincial highway system in Gatineau, there is a circuitous connection to the Ontario provincial highway system. The interprovincial truck route in Ottawa includes the KERWN corridor through the dense ByWard Market downtown area, which is an ongoing quality-of-life issue for adjacent communities and businesses.



**Notes:**

1. The Chaudières Bridge was periodically closed for repairs and maintenance in 2019, 2022 and 2023.
2. The Alexandra Bridge has had reduced load restrictions since March 2020 and was closed for repairs between 2023 and 2025.

Changes emerging from evolving work locations, technological advances, development patterns, and more, all impact how, when and why people move.

## 2.7 Key Interprovincial Transportation Issues

Six key interprovincial transportation issues that currently exist in the National Capital Region were identified based on an analysis of existing conditions and stakeholder engagement.

**Congestion on crossings:** Many vehicles cross the river during the morning and afternoon peak times, resulting in traffic congestion when vehicular capacity is reached. Numerous automobiles often carry a single individual and therefore require more road space per person than other transportation methods (such as public transit, carpools, walking or biking). In 2022, almost half of all interprovincial trips were by single occupant vehicles during peak times.

**Indirect routes for trucks:** Trucks have limited interprovincial crossing routes and do not have a direct connection from the Ontario highways to the interprovincial crossings. As a result, trucks currently travel through Ottawa and Gatineau's downtown core and neighbourhoods to reach one of the two bridges that permit trucks. This results in safety concerns and negative impacts such as noise and traffic congestion in the downtown core and local communities.

**Population growth in Gatineau:** In Gatineau, the working population exceeds the number of jobs, and this is expected to continue beyond 2050. As a result, many people need to commute across the river into Ottawa in the morning for work and return to Gatineau in the afternoon. This can result in significant travel delays on the crossings and highlights the need to accommodate growth in ways that ensure equity of access to employment opportunities.

**Sustainable transportation limitations:** While the downtown cores of both Ottawa and Gatineau are well serviced by public transit, suburb-to-suburb travel between the provinces can be challenging and inconvenient. Furthermore, while there are ongoing and planned improvements to the active mobility networks in both Ottawa and Gatineau, the geographical distribution of the bridges in the region requires travel through the downtown core regardless of the destination. This can make it challenging to efficiently travel between the provinces by cycling or walking.

**Lack of space near the crossings:** There is a lack of space at the entrances and exits to the existing crossings due to existing urban built form and important heritage, ecological and other considerations. Enlargement of approach roads to existing bridges is therefore not feasible and additional capacity on these bridges must be focused on greater use of public transit and active modes.

**Regional governance and decision making:** The cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, and provincial and federal agencies, often collaborate on interprovincial transportation studies and operations, particularly in the delivery of cross-river transit services. Yet, there remains opportunities to improve regional collaboration and coordination to help guide and prioritize transportation capital investments in the National Capital Region, as recently proposed in 2025 by the federal department of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC).

Shared transportation involves multiple people using the same transportation resource. This has already been widely commercialized through ride-hailing.



## 2.8 Emerging Trends

There are numerous emerging trends impacting urban areas, including the National Capital Region. Changes emerging from evolving work locations, technological advances, development patterns, and more, all impact how, when and why people move. While the direct result of these trends remains uncertain, future transportation systems should be planned and designed with an understanding that these emerging trends may involve both risks and opportunities. Monitoring is required for transportation systems to adapt to changing travel patterns that are driven by these trends.

**Work-from-home levels:** Although the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a shift to remote working, there has since been a gradual reduction in work-from-home levels and, in September 2024, the federal government, as the largest employer in the National Capital Region, mandated its employees back to the office a minimum of three days a week. This trend continues with many other employers in the National Capital Region introducing similar return-to-office policies. The evolution of remote work and hybrid work arrangements will need to continue to be monitored in the coming years as travel patterns stabilize.

**E-commerce:** E-commerce has been growing in North America in recent years. Many residents have leveraged new home delivery services or increased their patronage of existing ones to shop for a wide range of products and services. If these trends continue, there could be a sustained higher demand for these services. Despite these changes, the volume and travel patterns of trucks on the interprovincial bridges has remained relatively stable. There has also been a regional push to shift towards smaller delivery vans and cargo e-bike deliveries. Curbside management is a key consideration as these vehicles will be making frequent stops for short periods of time.

**Complete community policies:** The planning policies of both Gatineau and Ottawa include direction towards complete communities, places where people can live, work and play within close proximity and without excessive need to commute. The current forecasts suggest that the population will continue to exceed employment in Gatineau, with many people commuting from Gatineau to Ottawa for work. However, this may change as Gatineau's policies encourage economic growth and increases in local employment.

E-commerce has been growing in North America in recent years. Many residents have leveraged new home delivery services or increased their patronage of existing ones to shop for a wide range of products and services.

With input from National Capital Region agencies on transportation priorities, the Strategic Plan explored what interprovincial travel could look like in 2050 based on current trends.

**Congestion pricing:** Congestion pricing is a tool that charges a fee on users in congested areas to incentivize other forms of transportation. This can take a variety of forms, such as tolls or broader area-wide pricing strategies. This tool has the potential to encourage more efficient use of existing capacity and influence travel demand on the interprovincial crossings and could be considered in the future.

**Automated vehicles (AVs):** Automated vehicles have the capability to perform driving tasks without a human operator. These vehicles fall on a spectrum regarding the degree of automation, but companies are researching and developing cars capable of higher levels of automation that would require significantly less human intervention. The timeline for widespread use of AVs is uncertain, with estimates varying widely. Once fully implemented, these vehicles may deeply transform mobility patterns across the world and in the National Capital Region. Some studies suggest they could improve safety and capacity on roadway networks, since they can travel closely together without human error. However, their deployment might also lead to increased vehicle-kilometres travelled and urban sprawl since fully automated vehicles could entice more people to travel by car for longer distances. Goods movement may also change with the adoption of more automated technology. Transit is an early opportunity for automation to improve quality of service and reliability; Ottawa's O-Train Confederation Line currently operates with automated train control supervised by an operator. In the coming years, as the deployment of automated vehicles approaches, it will become increasingly important to develop a strong regional policy framework to avoid more congestion, reduced transit ridership, and more dispersed land use patterns.

**Electrification:** Many vehicle manufacturers have been heavily investing in their capacity to produce battery-powered, plug-in electric vehicles (EVs). As investments have increased and more government subsidies and grants have become available, EVs have become more commonplace on the streets of Ottawa and Gatineau. This has the potential to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emission but raises questions of how municipalities should effectively implement charging networks. All levels of government support electric vehicle adoption as a key strategy for reducing emissions in the coming years.

**Connected vehicles:** Vehicles and remote systems can communicate wirelessly in real time. This enables fare payment systems between transit agencies to be integrated, real-time reporting of where vehicles are and how often they are used, dynamic prices for transportation infrastructure that can adjust based on how much the infrastructure is used, and connectivity between vehicles and other vehicles as well as infrastructure. This has the potential to improve transportation safety and efficiency given the increase in available real-time information. Many cities have started to implement supporting infrastructure on their transportation networks.

**Shared transportation:** Shared transportation involves multiple people using the same transportation resource. This has already been widely commercialized through ride-hailing. Shared use of bikes, electric scooters and other personal mobility vehicles is also growing. This may result in an increase in their use for short trips between the downtowns, or the use of shared transportation by local businesses for goods delivery. However, these shared transportation modes can be challenging to regulate, particularly between municipalities and provinces, and may increase conflicts between users on the curbs in busy downtown areas.

**Mobility as a service (MaaS):** A growing opportunity emerges to offer mobility (the ability to travel from one place to another) as a service rather than selling vehicles or rides on individual modes of transportation. This is termed “mobility as a service,” or MaaS. MaaS offers travellers a single platform to manage trips across all modes. The vision is that a user will enter their starting point and desired destination, and a central platform will scan all modes of travel across public and private-sector services to plan the optimal route. Ticketing, trip booking and payment processing would all be handled by the platform. MaaS has the potential to make it easier for residents to discover and use sustainable shared-ride options; however, it also may increase the use of single-passenger autonomous vehicles and congestion. Further challenges also exist related to data privacy between private mobility providers and governments and implementing a sustainable business model when aggregating multiple private mobility providers into a single platform.



The Strategic Plan assumed a range of work-from-home levels of 13% to 26% in 2050 based on 2024 observations in the National Capital Region.

## 2.9 Interprovincial Travel in the National Capital Region in 2050

The population in the National Capital Region is expected to grow by 37% to 1.9 million people between 2022 and 2050, with employment expected to grow 26% to 960,000 jobs over the same period. This could result in a 50% increase in the number of people travelling between the provinces over the next two decades.

This Strategic Plan explored what interprovincial travel in the National Capital Region could look like in 2050 based on current trends and input from government agencies and stakeholders about transportation priorities. This was a key element for the 2025 technical update, which applied various sensitivity testing to each of the modelled future scenarios to better understand the gaps between where we are likely headed versus the vision and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

### **Key questions included:**

- How would travel needs change between today and 2050?
- How would transportation improvements currently planned, such as TramGO, influence access to opportunities in the National Capital Region?
- How would the current transportation challenges look in 2050 and what new challenges may arise?

In 2050, interprovincial transit ridership is expected to more than double compared to 2022.

## Unknowns and Uncertainties

As with all long-term planning, there are many unknowns and uncertainties that can influence outcomes. The pandemic highlighted how context and needs can rapidly shift. These are some of the key elements that can impact the Strategic Plan.

### Extending rush-hour periods

As the number of people crossing the river is forecasted to grow, the rush-hour periods may start earlier and end later. This extension of the rush-hour periods is influenced by when commuters choose to travel and increasing flexibility in work schedules. If demand spreads over time, the demand on the transportation system is alleviated, either accommodating more trips overall or reducing queues at peak times.

### Long-term work-from-home levels

The Strategic Plan assumed a range of work-from-home levels in 2050 based on 2024 observations in the National Capital Region. Shifts in this percentage would have a major impact on rush-hour demand on interprovincial crossings.

### Change in retail and goods movement

The acceleration of online shopping means a change in the supply chain with more deliveries directly to the end users with smaller vehicles. However, interprovincial heavy truck volumes have remained stable in recent years.

### Impact of induced demand

Induced demand is the concept of “build it and they will come” or “add transportation capacity and they will use it.” This can be unsustainable in the case of road infrastructure that may induce more driving and suburban sprawl, or sustainable with the provision of separated bike lanes to encourage cycling or additional transit service to increase ridership.

### Changing investment priorities

The status and timing of projects reliant on multiple levels of government approvals and funding is subject to change, influencing the projected outcomes of the Strategic Plan.

### Rate of economic growth

The Strategic Plan is based on a range of population and employment projections focused on most-likely scenarios of economic growth. How the future economy will influence development and travel patterns is not yet known.

Morning rush-hour travel time for interprovincial auto trips to work is expected to grow by approximately 25% between 2022 and 2050.

In Ottawa, employment is anticipated to increase faster than the population. Conversely, in Gatineau, population growth is expected to outpace that of employment. This imbalance generates additional demand for interprovincial travel, which is projected to increase by more than 50% by 2050. Coordination and integration between government agencies in both provinces is expected to lead to major transportation improvements, such as the implementation of the TramGO project. These improvements help to facilitate travel connections across one region and help to provide equitable access to opportunities.

While the long-term trajectory of telecommuting remains uncertain, it is uncertain that pre-pandemic work models are to return entirely, especially for office-based employment. These evolving work patterns are reshaping peak travel demand, transit ridership, downtown vitality, and the scale and nature of interprovincial travel. They also contribute to changing land use such as converting commercial space to residential use, signaling potential long-term land-use transformations and continued downsizing of federal office space.

The transportation improvements assumed for 2050 include rapid transit investments that improve transit speed and reliability. This contributes towards a more sustainable use of crossing infrastructure, as the overall interprovincial mode share for transit, walking and cycling is expected to increase by 10% compared to 2022. Morning rush-hour transit ridership towards Ottawa is expected to grow by 100% due to transit improvements that create an attractive alternative to private vehicles. This will significantly increase the people-carrying capacity of the crossings.

When considering the planned transit improvements by 2050, the TramGO project has the most significant potential to attract new interprovincial ridership, accounting for 83% of the projected increase. By comparison, the potential conversion of the Chief William Commanda Bridge to transit is projected to increase ridership by 15%, while requiring significant investment to support higher-order transit.

This increase in the proportion of trips made by sustainable modes, in addition to the adoption of zero-emission vehicles, has positive effects on the environment and climate change, as greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.



Heavy truck traffic is also anticipated to increase as the region grows, while the lack of direct connection between Ontario highways and the interprovincial crossings remains.

Despite transit improvements and assumed work-from-home levels, there will continue to be congestion and delays on the crossings, largely experienced by people in automobiles and trucks. Morning commute travel times for interprovincial auto trips is expected to grow by approximately 25% between 2022 and 2050. Congestion-related delays have negative impacts on the economy, as spending time in traffic prevents people from contributing to the economy and increases the time it takes for goods to be transported. As more capacity on existing downtown bridges is dedicated to improving transit service, additional interprovincial connections outside of the core area would shorten certain trips and reduce delays for people crossing the river.

Interprovincial walking and cycling trips are projected to increase by 2050. Most interprovincial trips via active modes are under 16 km. This was explored further through the 2025 technical update with sensitivity testing specific to electric bikes, which suggests a potential 150% increase in the number of interprovincial peak-period bike trips in 2050 compared to 2022. As a result of growing trip distances due to electrification and infrastructure improvements, much of the National Capital Region population is within a reasonable bike trip distance from an interprovincial crossing. The eastern and western suburban and rural regions of both Ottawa and Gatineau are notable exceptions as the interprovincial crossings are too far to bike for most people in these areas. A new interprovincial crossing in either of these areas with high-quality pedestrian and cycling infrastructure would encourage new walking and cycling trips by providing new active mobility connections.

Heavy truck traffic is also anticipated to increase as the region grows, while the lack of direct connection between Ontario highways and the interprovincial crossings remains. This negatively impacts economic prosperity, including health, safety and quality of life, as the trucks must travel through dense neighbourhoods and Ottawa's downtown core to reach the crossings. Heavy trucks also circulate in Gatineau's downtown core.

If current trends continue, the use of sustainable transportation modes will increase. However, the forecasted growth in population, employment and interprovincial trips means that many of the current issues facing the National Capital Region, identified in this chapter, are expected to intensify.

## 2.10 Variability in Interprovincial Travel

This Strategic Plan focuses on a range of potential travel demands for 2050, while acknowledging unknowns and uncertainties discussed in the previous section. However, some infrastructure changes considered to support the region in 2050 have lifecycles far exceeding the 2050 horizon year. For example, a new interprovincial bridge would be designed and built to last up to 125 years, remaining in operation well beyond 2150. Uncertainty in the pace of growth, location of future developments and workplaces, and technological advancements, among many other factors, make it additionally challenging to anticipate these future conditions. While long-term projections in growth and travel beyond 2050 become inherently uncertain, this Strategic Plan did explore current trends and planning principles that could influence longer-term transportation considerations beyond 2050.

If recent regional growth patterns continue beyond 2050, the population could grow significantly by the later half of this century. Current development trends suggest much of this development may occur in suburban areas. With population growth, interprovincial travel could also grow, putting greater strain on existing and future infrastructure. Continued emphasis will need to be placed on supporting travel by transit, walking and cycling.

Transit is generally most efficient when serving areas of dense development enabling higher frequencies of service and more direct routing. This could mean providing high-quality and capacity connections to key employment regions like the downtown core. This could also mean providing new direct connections between suburban areas on either side of the Ottawa River to reduce travel distances as the region expands.





Active transportation is an efficient and cost-effective mode of transportation, particularly attractive for shorter-distance trips and “last-mile” connections to rapid transit stations. In the long term, well-spaced interprovincial crossings spread across the region with high-quality, active transportation facilities connecting to rapid transit stations will encourage interprovincial travel by these modes. Increasing electrification of micromobility and the prominence of e-bikes is also expected to gradually increase the travel distances and speeds of these modes in the future, making them attractive for a wider range of trips.

While both transit and active transportation would benefit from new and well-spaced crossings of the river as the region grows, this approach also benefits the communities surrounding the existing crossings. When interprovincial travel is concentrated into few crossings, like the KERWN corridor, quality of life for residents in the surrounding areas diminishes. Encouraging regional travel demand to spread across the National Capital Region by all modes will help to balance these impacts.

# 3 The Vision for Interprovincial Transportation in 2050

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## The Strategic Plan Vision

By 2050, the transportation network to cross the Ottawa River will provide well-connected and sustainable travel options that contribute to a high quality of life and economic prosperity in the National Capital Region. The system of crossings will support equitable mobility and the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, while respecting the region's natural environment and cultural heritage.

Developed in consultation with municipalities in the region, stakeholders and the public, the vision for the Strategic Plan sets a sustainable path to achieve common goals and objectives under five strategic pillars:

- One Region (Transportation Integration)
- Sustainable Use of Crossing Infrastructure
- Environment and Climate Change
- Economy
- Quality of Life

Figure 3-1 describes in detail the key objectives for each strategic pillar. Finding a balance and understanding the interactions between the pillars and objectives is one of the challenges of the Strategic Plan. Strategies that are highly beneficial to one pillar may come with negative consequences for another.

Finding balance and understanding the interactions between the pillars is one of the challenges of the Strategic Plan.

**Figure 3-1: Strategic Pillars and Objectives**

<b>Pillar 1: One Region (Transportation Integration).</b>		
Physical integration	Organizational integration	Symbolic integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-connected Ottawa and Gatineau downtowns that serve as multi-modal transportation hubs</li> <li>Land use and transportation crossing infrastructure supporting each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meaningful involvement of all levels of government in interprovincial transportation plans and coordination in standards, regulations, maintenance and enforcement</li> <li>Meaningful opportunities to involve the Algonquin Anishinabeg</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context-appropriate design that preserves and enhances the character, unique cultural heritage and crossings' symbolic role in the nation's capital</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar 2: Sustainable Use of Crossing Infrastructure</b>		
Moving people and goods more efficiently	Comfortable and convenient transportation choices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sustainable and space-efficient mode use for cross-river trips</li> <li>Reduced auto use and overall demand for peak interprovincial trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved mobility options are available for cross-river trips</li> </ul>	
<b>Pillar 3: Environment and Climate Change</b>		
Environmental quality	Resilience	Protected environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants from transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better withstanding of extreme weather disruptions associated with climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce and then further mitigate disruption to natural areas, waterways and parks along the river</li> </ul>



## Pillar 4: Economy

Prosperity and competitiveness	Connecting beyond the region	Efficiency and fiscal responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced delay for people and goods crossing the river</li> <li>• Supporting tourism in the National Capital Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced travel time to connect between provincial highway systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled spending and sustainable funding sources for crossing infrastructure, services and maintenance</li> </ul>

## Pillar 5: Quality of Life

Balancing goods movement and a high quality of life	Safety and security	Access to opportunities and nature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved community health and safety in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the crossings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved real and perceived traveller safety and comfort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced travel time for cross-river trips mainly through decreased trip distance between place-of-work and place-of-residence</li> <li>• Equitable access to efficient cross-river travel</li> <li>• Increased access to the region's natural spaces</li> </ul>



## 4 Plan Direction

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If existing trends and conditions persist, the National Capital Region will face significant transportation challenges by 2050.

Additionally, there are gaps between this trend-based 2050 National Capital Region and the desired 2050 National Capital Region outlined in the vision, pillars and objectives.

This chapter describes how the Strategic Plan addresses these challenges and fills these gaps. An overall approach was used to develop several scenarios that reflected different transportation initiatives and investments. Each of these scenarios were refined to meet the vision and pillars with different combinations of infrastructure and policy directions.

### 4.1 Approach to the Strategic Plan

The analysis of existing and future conditions and the testing of policy and infrastructure scenarios is based upon a framework of data and regional growth assumptions. This context is a fundamental part of developing the Strategic Plan directions and the following provide an overall approach to the development and testing of potential directions.

- 1. A flexible framework:** Flexible framework to guide interprovincial mobility  
Uncertainty about the pace and location of population and employment growth in the National Capital Region over the next 25 years continues to be a major theme identified through the 2025 update to this Strategic Plan.

Advancements in mobility technologies and the implementation of major interprovincial transportation projects, such as the STO TramGO project and a new interprovincial bridge in the east, suggest a flexible framework along with regional collaboration will be required more than ever. This will help move key interprovincial projects forward and help guide interprovincial travel over the next 25 years and beyond.

This Strategic Plan will evolve and require regular updates given the evolution of travel patterns, transport infrastructure, land-use policies and the available data sources. These updates will be based on the planned monitoring framework and will guide future enhancements of the monitoring program.

**2. Better data:** Update data to ensure decisions are fact-based and reflect changing realities

The key to the evolution of this Strategic Plan will be ongoing and enhanced data collection and monitoring to assist with evidence-based decisions that respond to changing realities. Towards this effort, the 2025 technical update utilized the most up-to-date regional origin destination data (2022) for residential trips and new commercial truck origin-destination travel data (2023). The NCC will continue working with regional partners to regularly collect interprovincial travel data.

More frequent and better data collection efforts are under way with regional partners in conjunction with regular planned updates of this Strategic Plan to improve decision-making and validate findings and analysis of interprovincial travel.

**3. Regional collaboration:** Collaborate and coordinate transportation across the region

Creating new forums for regional transportation planning and analysis coordination, such as the TRANS Committee, will help to build on current cooperative planning practices and ensure more collaborative planning and delivery of interprovincial transportation services. Many of the existing initiatives to address interprovincial travel are reinforced and supported through the vision and objectives of this Strategic Plan. Towards this effort, the NCC can play a pivotal role with its unique mandate to help coordinate regional transportation efforts, which has become increasingly important and integrated into the NCC's corporate plan priorities since 2024.

**4. Leverage opportunities:** Leverage emerging trends in technology and travel patterns

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated patterns that were already under way, such as remote work, off-site learning and online shopping. In September 2024, the federal government, as the largest employer in the National Capital Region, mandated its employees back to the office a minimum of three days a week. This trend continues with many other employers in the National Capital Region introducing similar return-to-office policies. Long-term hybrid and remote work arrangements have the potential to moderate the growth in peak period travel as the region grows. For example, effectively spreading hybrid work travel throughout the week will help to reduce traffic congestion at peak times. The evolution of remote work and hybrid work arrangements will need to be monitored in the coming years as travel patterns stabilize.



As part of the strategic planning and technical update process, several scenarios were prepared and tested to compare how different transportation initiatives and investments would impact travel patterns and behaviour in the National Capital Region.

**5. Sustainability focus:** Prioritize sustainable mobility through targeted investments and optimization

The Strategic Plan focuses on sustainable directions for interprovincial travel. Even with hybrid work arrangements, increases in population growth and employment in the National Capital Region will result in about 50% more daily interprovincial work trips in 2050 compared to today. To continue encouraging sustainable travel, particularly during peak commuter periods, the total number of interprovincial general-purpose lanes must be carefully managed to avoid inducing unsustainable travel choices. Conversely, to maximize the people-moving capacity of the bridges, and particularly in the core area where demand is highest, more vehicle lanes will need to be re-allocated to transit and high-occupancy vehicles to move people more efficiently.

Immediate and near-term investments in higher-order transit, such as the TramGO project and Ottawa (Stage 2 O-Train), will significantly increase the number of people travelling by transit.

With an anticipated modal shift to transit, high-occupancy vehicles, and active modes, combined with a shift to zero-emission vehicles, greenhouse gas emissions for interprovincial travel can be reduced significantly by 2050.

## 4.2 Testing Potential Directions

As part of the strategic planning and technical update process, several scenarios were prepared and tested to compare how different transportation initiatives and investments would impact travel patterns and behaviour in the National Capital Region. The analysis was based on future 2050 travel demand and compares performance against the baseline conditions described earlier in section 2.7.

The results are intended to inform decisions about potential design and modifications to infrastructure while recognizing that there are many ways that the National Capital Region can evolve over the next 25 years and beyond.

## These scenarios fell under two broad categories:

### 1. Making better use of existing crossings

This direction included scenarios that focus on bold actions, including enhanced transit service, reconfiguration of existing crossings and strong policies to manage interprovincial travel demand.

#### Key questions that were tested in the scenarios under this category included:

- What are the impacts to the National Capital Region if interprovincial travel is limited to only infrastructure projects currently planned by regional partners without new major interprovincial infrastructure?
- How does the location of work influence peak interprovincial travel patterns?
- What are the potential impacts of program-related initiatives and policies, such as travel demand management measures and roadway reconfigurations?

#### What did we test?

- The influence of work-from-home and remote office / shared workplaces on travel demand.
- Expanded policy measures supporting a shift to active modes of transportation and e-bikes.
- Expanded travel demand management programs for major employers.
- Policies that restrict heavy truck movements in the core area.

#### What did we find?

There are opportunities to optimize the people-carrying capacity of existing interprovincial infrastructure.

Work-from-home levels will reduce commute demand only if coordinated so that not everyone travels to work on the same days.

Where people choose to reside has implications on travel demand, given current employment locations.

Interprovincial heavy-truck movements will not significantly be reduced within the core area without a combination of new infrastructure and the implementation of truck traffic restrictions and truck route network changes.

Banning or restricting trucks from the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge without a new river crossing would result in the diversion of trucks to the Chaudières Crossing.

## What other measures may be required to reduce the volume and impacts of heavy trucks?

The 2022 analysis and this 2025 update to this Strategic Plan suggest that new infrastructure alone will not solve the challenges created by heavy truck travel in the core area. As a next step, a regional goods movement strategy is needed to further identify the most effective municipal, provincial and federal coordinated measures to mitigate the impacts of interprovincial heavy trucks. The following are some non-infrastructure measures that could be explored:

Expand and adjust interprovincial truck routes, including the use of incentives and/or disincentives, to better balance truck volumes across the region and by time of day. This requires collaboration with local municipalities to assess the alternatives and the resulting impacts on other communities and the economy.

Reimagine goods movement logistics, such as the use of local distribution or consolidation centres where goods are transferred onto smaller vehicles at the periphery of an urban area. This requires collaboration with the goods movement industry. Doing so would remove the largest trucks from the urban area and would instead increase the number of smaller trucks circulating.

Integrate existing policies and plans, such as goods movement and truck route strategies being pursued by local municipalities.

Encourage multi-modal goods movement, such as the use of cargo bikes for local deliveries, which is being explored by various companies in North America.

It is important to note that the roles and responsibilities to implement these measures vary, requiring collaboration and coordination between the NCC, municipalities, provinces, industry partners and others.



## 2. Investing in major infrastructure

This direction included scenarios that pursue further investments to address 2050 transportation needs, such as new crossings of the Ottawa River.

### Key questions that were tested in the scenarios under this category included:

- How does a new interprovincial crossing impact travel patterns in the region? How does the location of this crossing affect its performance?
- To what extent can repurposing lanes to transit on existing crossings help maximize their people-moving capacity and reduce vehicular traffic through the core area?
- What additional measures in combination with new interprovincial infrastructure will further reduce the impacts of vehicle and heavy truck traffic in the KERWN corridor and core area?

### What did we test?

- Integrating the downtown transit loop with the TramGO project and Rapibus, operating as a tram service on the Portage Bridge and Alexandra Bridge replacement.
- A new all-mode crossing in the east, west or both.
- The Ottawa traffic tunnel to connect the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge to Highway 417, with and without a new bridge.
- Combinations of truck routing allowances and restrictions on existing and proposed interprovincial infrastructure.

### What did we find?

- Dedicated lanes for transit on existing bridges in the core area would improve transit connectivity and increase people-moving capacity on the corridors where there is high travel demand. Reducing general-purpose vehicle operations on the existing core area bridges would offer opportunities to enhance other modes of sustainable travel, such as high-occupancy vehicles or more protected and improved space for walking and cycling.
- To expand capacity for interprovincial travel by rapid transit beyond the TramGO project, the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project offers a good opportunity to create a two-way loop in the core area, with potential connections to the Rapibus corridor. Even if ridership is not anticipated to be sufficient by 2050 to require this additional service expansion, the development of an interprovincial transit loop should be studied further in collaboration with transit agencies and municipalities to prepare for its future implementation.

- A new crossing would provide opportunities to reduce interprovincial trip distances and out-of-the-way travel, thereby reducing circuitous interprovincial trips that must currently travel through the core area.
- The analysis conducted as part of the 2025 technical update indicates that a downtown traffic tunnel would reduce morning peak hour interprovincial heavy truck volumes in the KERWN corridor by approximately 65% and 10% on the Chaudières Crossing in 2050. However, the tunnel would not provide alternative routes for truck travel across the Ottawa River, further increasing the reliance of goods movement on the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge.
- A new crossing would provide an opportunity to divert interprovincial heavy trucks not destined for the core area. The effectiveness of diverting trips will be dependent on the location of the crossing, efficiency of the connectivity to major origins and destinations in the region, and the regional partners' willingness to ban intercity truck movements on the KERWN corridor. The eastern all-mode crossing has a comparatively higher potential to divert truck traffic from the core area and KERWN corridor than one in the western part of the National Capital Region.
- Diverting heavy trucks from the core area will require more than a new crossing, such as adjustments to the interprovincial truck routes, and/or combinations of incentives and disincentives. A regional goods movement strategy is needed to further identify the most effective municipal, provincial and federal coordinated measures to better manage the impacts of interprovincial heavy trucks.

### 4.3 Summary of Key Findings

Interprovincial commute trips and heavy truck movements through the core area represent the biggest challenges for interprovincial travel.

Trips to work from Gatineau to Ottawa have historically represented the largest generator of interprovincial travel demand in the morning peak period. In Gatineau, the projected population growth, combined with a low employment growth, will reinforce this dependence and result in increased travel to employment opportunities in Ottawa by 2050. While employment in downtown Ottawa and near transit stations is relatively easy to access by sustainable modes, there will remain jobs that are less accessible by transit, walking and cycling.

Growing cities face mobility challenges, particularly when there are few alternatives to driving with high concentrations of employment in downtown areas. The focus needs to shift towards managing the network to optimize use of available space, provide alternatives and improve reliability. There are unique opportunities within the context of the National Capital Region,

Opportunities to enhance the vehicular capacity of existing crossings are limited in the core area.

Planned transit projects are critical to meet growth in demand.

Diverting interprovincial heavy truck travel away from the core area will require more than a new crossing. A regional goods movement strategy is needed to further identify the most effective municipal, provincial and federal coordinated measures to mitigate the impacts of interprovincial heavy trucks.

including highly centralized employment in downtown Ottawa and Gatineau, where the federal government can continue to play a role in influencing employee travel behaviour and encourage self-sufficient communities. In addition, where congestion occurs in constrained locations, such as on the interprovincial crossings, there is potential for shifting to more efficient modes.

Over the long term, well-spaced interprovincial crossings with high-quality active transportation facilities will encourage interprovincial travel by walking and cycling. The ongoing electrification of micromobility and the prominence of e-bikes is also expected to increase the travel distances and speeds of these modes with the potential to more than double the number of interprovincial bike trips in 2050 compared to 2022.

The highest demand for interprovincial crossings is within the core area of Ottawa and Gatineau, near the areas of the existing crossings. However, providing additional routes within this area to increase capacity and to improve redundancy is a challenge. This includes the environmental sensitivity and geography of the Ottawa River, the protection of the visual landscape of Canada's Parliament, and the built-up communities on both banks of the river.

The construction of TramGO and the completion of Stage 2 of the O-Train will play a major role to accommodate the increase in travel demand by transit mode across the Ottawa River and the entire region. These higher-order transit projects also have the potential to influence land use, with greater transit-oriented mixed-use development and more people living and working adjacent to major transit stations.

Heavy truck travel is concentrated in the downtowns and core area of the region, a combined effect of being a key destination for goods deliveries and also the most direct route for trucks not destined for the core area, such as logging trucks. Heavy truck and articulated truck movements will also grow as demand for goods increases in the region, particularly with an increase in online shopping. Shifting goods movement by large trucks and tractor trailers onto smaller vehicles, modifying truck movement and delivery times, and diverting those vehicles onto alternative routes are goals that will require more discussion with industry stakeholders and a comprehensive regional truck study. A new interprovincial crossing in combination with municipal and provincial measures for truck incentives and/or disincentives will be most effective in the diversion of heavy trucks from the core area. A truck study in collaboration with regional partners and stakeholders will be required to determine the optimal strategies and measures to mitigate interprovincial trucking impacts.

## 4.4 Strategic Plan Directions

The Strategic Plan is centred on the following five key pillars supporting the overarching vision:

- One Region
- Sustainable Use of Crossing Infrastructure
- Environment and Climate Change
- Economy
- Quality of Life

### Moving Together as One Region

The National Capital Region includes several municipalities and two provinces. This creates a planning and governance context that is unique within Canada, although the Strategic Plan shows that the vision and objectives for interprovincial travel are generally aligned between the NCC and its municipalities. Meeting future interprovincial travel needs will require continued collaboration and shared decision-making.

Governance structures and decision-making

Chapter 6 explores potential considerations and approaches to transportation planning and service delivery on a regional scale. While the Strategic Plan does not recommend a specific approach or model, it lays out the vision and objectives that serve as a foundation for further discussion on governance approaches and structures and to guide future decision-making.

In some existing examples globally, major investment in new infrastructure crossing jurisdictional boundaries provided the impetus to have further discussion on roles, responsibilities and governance. Planned and potential investments in new interprovincial infrastructure will require agreements related to funding, construction and operations. The role of the NCC is also evolving, with additional resources dedicated to interprovincial mobility projects like the Alexandra Bridge Replacement Project, and the NCC transit office supporting the STO TramGO project. The discussions of governance will need to continue and consider the sensitivity and fit within existing governance structures.

Meeting future interprovincial travel needs will require continued collaboration and shared decision making.

Continuing to support improved transit priority on the interprovincial crossings will play an important role for the agencies to deliver reliable and effective service.

### **Coordination of planning between agencies**

The existing TRANS Committee is an example of successful intergovernmental transportation data collection, modelling and forecasting collaboration and coordination in place in the National Capital Region. The committee and its members recognize the benefits of coordinating transportation data collection and analysis on a regional level.

Recent initiatives coordinated within the National Capital Region included the update to the origin-destination household travel survey (2022) and the regional truck survey (2023).

### **Service integration and seamless travel**

OC Transpo and STO currently operate bus services that cross the Ottawa River and fares are integrated, in terms of one agency's fare media being accepted on the other. STO operates very frequent service into downtown Ottawa via the Portage Bridge, while OC Transpo operates frequent service over the Chaudières Crossing and peak period service over the Portage Bridge. Like other modes of travel, the interprovincial transit services are concentrated in the core area using the existing crossings. Opportunities for further integration over time include enhanced fare integration, improved station access and better connections between the two interprovincial services.

Continuing to support improved transit priority on the interprovincial crossings will play an important role for the agencies to deliver reliable and effective service. While the NCC does not play a specific role in the planning or delivery of transit service, it can support the advancement of higher-order transit projects.

## **Encouraging Sustainable Mobility**

Encouraging more sustainable mobility is critical to achieving the Strategic Plan's vision. An important part of sustainable mobility is efficiently moving people and goods on the existing crossings. This involves offering comfortable and convenient transportation choices that are competitive with personal vehicles.

### **Implement planned transit projects**

Gatineau and Ottawa have numerous planned and committed transit projects that are anticipated to be implemented by 2050. These projects are essential to improving sustainable mobility in the region, a shared goal of all levels of government.

Key highlights include the Ottawa Stage 2 O-Train extension and the planned TramGO project.

### **Strengthen interprovincial active transportation connections**

Improving the interprovincial active transportation networks encourages the use of sustainable mobility. It will be important to upgrade bridge infrastructure where required and increase year-round connectivity to make getting to and from the crossings easier. Both Ottawa and Gatineau plans already include important additions and upgrades to the network.

Observations made about the active transportation facilities on the Chief William Commanda Bridge prove that new interprovincial infrastructure dedicated to active modes of transportation can attract a significant number of users and represent an important increased connectivity across the river.

Regional actors should continue to explore new active transportation opportunities, such as the recent crowdfunded proposal to construct a new footbridge across the Ottawa River's Deschênes Rapids.

### **Support regional bike-share deployment and e-bike adoption**

Bike share offers the opportunity to further support active transportation in the core area and surrounding neighbourhoods where it supplements other modes of travel. Collaborative efforts to bring bike share back to Ottawa-Gatineau should be supported, as this could improve interprovincial active transportation connectivity in various ways.

Regional actors should further explore opportunities to support e-bike adoption through incentives and infrastructure. E-bikes present an opportunity to further reshape urban and suburban mobility by extending the practical range of cycling and replacing car trips over longer distances. Analyses conducted during this technical update and a growing body of research show that e-bikes can significantly impact mode shift away from cars.

### **Expand travel demand management programs**

Travel demand management programs aim to reduce the number of trips made, encourage less travel during the busiest times and change destinations of trips so that fewer trips go to the busiest places at the busiest times. These actions help make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and can contribute to a more reliable and comfortable trip. The Strategic Plan aims to expand upon the robust and successful transportation demand management programs of Ottawa, Gatineau and the federal government.



## Analysis highlights:

Anticipated future electric vehicle uptake will substantially reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

New infrastructure increases system resilience to extreme weather by providing alternative routes when weather-related damage occurs.

## Move more people on the crossings

Making better use of the current and any future crossings by increasing their people-moving capacity is an important part of managing and accommodating interprovincial transportation as the region grows. Reconfiguring the crossings will be explored to make the most of the space and move more people. An important first step is to assess the existing transit-only and carpool lanes to identify potential measures to improve their effectiveness and opportunities for expansion.

## Protecting the Environment and Acting on Climate Change

Protecting the environment and acting on climate change are integral components of fostering a healthy, vibrant and liveable Capital Region. Transportation remains a large source of greenhouse gas and other air pollutants; reducing these emissions is a large part of achieving broader federal, provincial and municipal climate change goals. The federal government is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 through the *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*. In addition to reducing emissions, it is also important to minimize the environmental impacts of new infrastructure and implement climate change resiliency into design. Acting on climate change is a collective effort that requires the collaboration of all jurisdictions. The Strategic Plan focuses on reducing emissions through interprovincial transportation measures.

## Encourage electric vehicle use

Electric vehicles are an important part of reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and achieving overall greenhouse gas reduction targets. Encouraging more zero-emission vehicles must happen in parallel with reducing personal vehicle use no matter the technology. While zero-emission vehicles aid in reducing emissions, managing transportation demand and fostering a liveable Capital Region still requires more trips by transit and active transportation.

## Support net-zero transit vehicles

While diesel buses carry many people efficiently, with fewer emissions than the same number of people travelling by car, they are still sources of pollution. Both Ottawa and Gatineau are pursuing zero-emission bus fleets, which are being supported by funding from the Government of Canada. These will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from interprovincial travel. Advancing the TramGO project will also help reduce bus travel across the river.

## **Integrate climate change resiliency into design**

It is also important to incorporate climate-change resiliency into design, in addition to taking steps to reduce emissions. Weather and climate change considerations include many different measures, such as incorporating weather protection for walking and cycling infrastructure and designing infrastructure to reduce maintenance needs. The NCC will continue to incorporate best practices in climate-resilient design in all its projects.

## **Supporting Economic Prosperity**

Transportation plays an important role in supporting economic growth and prosperity. The interprovincial crossings play a vital role for travel within the region and, more broadly, connecting the provincial and national highway networks.

Global changes and evolution in goods movement logistics and technology have created shifts in the freight transportation needs in the National Capital Region. Although shopping centres and retail stores are experiencing a decline in patronage, with a resulting decline in travel demand, growth in online purchasing has increased delivery truck traffic through the region. At the end of 2024, retail stores experienced a year-over-year decline in sales of 2.2%, while e-commerce sales, over the same period, increased by 9.3%. As a result, decreases in personal automobile use due to this trend may ultimately be offset by an increase in light trucking to accommodate home deliveries.

The overall interprovincial travel demand in 2050 is expected to increase by 50% with personal vehicle and truck demand projected to increase by approximately 30%, leading to longer delays and more congestion.

Major new infrastructure is shown to have limited added benefit from a traffic delay perspective; however, it would have the advantage of improving network connectivity and offering an alternative route for goods movement outside of the core area.

## **Create capacity for more employment and economic activity in both downtowns**

Connecting the two downtowns by leveraging available capacity and investing in higher-order transit will improve access to employment and social opportunities in the core area. This would also boost tourism potential, supporting sustainable travel between cultural and other attractions on both sides of the Ottawa River.

Frequent, reliable higher-order transit travel between the two downtowns would reduce reliance on auto travel between federal offices.

## **Analysis highlights:**

A new interprovincial crossing, combined with additional measures to reduce heavy trucks from the core area, will help to balance trucking impacts across the region.

A collaborative approach among the three levels of government is needed to reduce trucks from the core area, including the associated Gatineau and Ottawa approaches.

Traffic congestion and delay are projected to increase by 2050 on the interprovincial crossings. Major new infrastructure is shown to have limited added benefit from a delay perspective; however, it would have the advantage of improving network connectivity and offering a route for goods movement outside the core area.

As the region continues to grow, delay is expected to increase for automobiles. A combination of measures to reduce automobile demand, along with new transit and active infrastructure will help to alleviate traffic congestion by shifting interprovincial travel to less space-intensive modes.

## Analysis highlights:

Strategic policy-based restrictions and incentives are also important for managing truck traffic.

More dedicated space for sustainable modes improves travel time reliability and makes sustainable modes more attractive.

## Develop a better understanding of alternative truck travel options in region

Reducing the impacts of interprovincial truck movements will require a combination of infrastructure and policy changes with input from many regional partners and stakeholders. A regional study to identify and discuss future interprovincial truck routing alternatives will help to refine future goods movement strategies and implementation plans.

## Integrate new retail and goods movement trends

The pandemic accelerated changes in retailing patterns that began over the past decade. Online shopping is more prevalent and has expanded beyond general merchandise and now includes day-to-day necessities such as groceries. Compared to in-person shopping, where there is a greater potential for fewer trips with larger purchases, low-cost or free same-day delivery have encouraged more frequent small online purchases, which results in a higher number of trips by delivery vehicles on roads. New distribution centres and pickup points have started to change travel and delivery patterns.

Integrating these changes into the understanding of goods movement and the retail economy will be important as the Strategic Plan evolves. This is not a unique challenge to the National Capital Region; exploring and implementing best practices from other cities, such as neighbourhood pickup points, urban consolidation centres and deliveries by alternate modes all have potential to reduce demand.

## Improving Quality of Life

The National Capital Region, with its abundant access to green space, excellent services and rich cultural opportunities, provides an excellent quality of life for residents. The transportation system plays an important part in maintaining and enhancing quality of life in the Capital Region.

Transportation contributes to quality of life by providing reliable and safe travel options, as well as managing negative externalities caused by transportation, including managing issues created by heavy trucks while still supporting the region's economy.

## Reduce heavy truck infiltration and impacts

Trucks are essential to the National Capital Region's economic well-being, but this traffic must be managed and balanced across the region to support quality of life. In the National Capital Region, interprovincial truck traffic currently uses downtown streets, primarily in Ottawa, to connect between the Quebec and Ontario provincial highway networks. This has negative

noise, pollution and safety impacts on surrounding communities. A new interprovincial crossing, combined with measures to reduce heavy trucks in the core area, will help balance heavy truck impacts across the region.

### **Encourage roadway improvements to King Edward Avenue**

King Edward Avenue is a gateway into the core area in Ontario and currently supports six vehicle lanes, with limited space for sidewalks, street furniture and landscaping. It would be useful to leverage opportunities associated with a new eastern bridge to reduce the vehicle lanes and improve the environment along King Edward Avenue for pedestrians, cyclists, and community residents.

### **Integrate Vision Zero policies**

Providing safe, multi-modal travel options is a critical part of both quality of life and encouraging more active transportation for interprovincial trips.

It is important to have infrastructure that promotes safety and comfort for people of all ages and abilities. When people feel safe and comfortable, they are more likely to use active transportation. Managing risks posed by heavy trucks and vehicles is important for furthering the safety of all road users.

Vision Zero is the broad philosophy that fatalities and serious injuries on the road network are preventable and the goal should be zero traffic-related fatalities and injuries. The NCC will integrate Vision Zero policies into its planning processes and explore measures, such as truck safety initiatives, pedestrian and cycling safety reviews and associated improvements, and updated roadway geometric designs, to enhance the safety of all road users.

### **Foster more reliable commutes**

Having consistent and predictable travel times improves quality of life by enabling better allocation of time by reducing the need to account for potential delays. This focus on managing unpredictable congestion, rather than reducing congestion, is about avoiding unpredictable delays, particularly related to sustainable modes. The NCC will work with municipalities to develop measures to foster more reliable interprovincial travel times, such as updating incident response plans to better respond to incidents that cause delay, coordinating construction projects to manage the impacts on all modes, expanding transit priority measures and improving real-time traveller information for all modes to enable people to choose alternate routes in case of unforeseen delays.





## 5 The Strategic Framework

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The Strategic Plan sets out the overall direction for interprovincial transportation in the National Capital Region and strategies to achieve the collective vision and objectives of the NCC and its partners. The testing of the potential directions, as outlined in Chapter 4, shows that current trends and already planned initiatives can have a significant influence.

This Strategic Plan offers the opportunity for the parties to take a greater collaborative approach to prioritize potential strategies, focusing on those that have the best potential to shift the trajectory towards the Strategic Plan's sustainability vision.

The three following timelines are proposed to frame delivery of the shared vision that creates a transportation system over the next 25 years.

- **Short term/bold starts (immediate to five-year horizon).** This represents the immediate timeline for strategies and quick wins that have a very strong potential to move towards achieving goals and objectives. Two key examples include working with agencies and stakeholders to create a plan that addresses heavy truck impacts and implementing a bike-share program for the National Capital Region within the next five years.
- **Medium term/initiating change (five-to-10-year horizon).** This represents the timeline for strategies that can be used in the near term that can play a greater role in shifting interprovincial travel behaviour. These strategies should have a high rate of return on investment with a prioritization on measures that reflect the sustainable vision, such as optimization of existing crossings and investment in transit and active transportation. They can also include strategies that enable longer-term decision making or capital investment.
- **Long term/sustaining progress (beyond 10 years).** This represents the longer-term timeline either where implementation requires further study or where the strategy may be influenced by the performance of other alternative demand management measures or optimizations pursued under bold starts or initiating change.

Section 5.1 summarizes the initiatives under each of the three timelines. This is intended to serve as a guide for continued progress towards the vision and is subject to change based on further study, available resources, capital funding priorities and policy changes.

## 5.1 Strategies

Figure 5-1: Strategies

	One Region	Sustainable	Environment	Economic	Quality of Life
<b>Short Term (1 of 2)</b>					
<b>Governance and Policy</b>					
Work with partners to complete updates to regional travel data, including origin-destination surveys and commercial vehicle surveys.	•				
Continue to coordinate construction projects on interprovincial crossings and connecting municipal roadways.	•				•
Continue to support and collaborate on interprovincial crossing initiatives, including the PSPC's sixth crossing project office and the NCC's transit office.	•	•		•	•
<b>Active Transportation</b>					
Continue to implement the Capital Pathway Strategic Plan.	•	•	•		•
Explore the feasibility of coordinated interprovincial micromobility sharing programs (i.e. e-scooters, bike sharing, etc.).	•	•			
Examine the feasibility of adding the crossings as part of Weekend Bikedays open streets events.	•	•	•		•
Expand "park-and-cycle" initiatives along key interprovincial cycling routes.		•	•		•
<b>Transportation Demand Management</b>					
Conduct assessments of work-from-home practices as part of overall updates to regional transportation data.		•		•	
Continue to support federal partners in advancing innovative workplace initiatives, such as co-working and office spaces modernization programs.		•		•	•
Encourage carpool programs for federal employees and increase preferential parking for carpooling at federal workplaces.		•			
Expand programs to encourage sustainable transportation at federal workplaces, such as employer-subsidized transit passes.		•			
<b>Environment and Climate Change</b>					
Integrate best practices for climate-resilient infrastructure as part of rehabilitation programs of existing crossings and design of new crossings.			•		
Adopt zero-emission fleet strategies for NCC and federal vehicles.			•		

	One Region	Sustainable	Environment	Economic	Quality of Life
<b>Short Term (2 of 2)</b>					
Expand provision of electric vehicle charging stations at federal workplaces and facilities.			•		
<b>Goods Movement</b>					
Embark on a joint regional interprovincial truck route and goods movement study to address impacts of heavy trucks in the core area.	•			•	
Establish a regional goods movement forum to engage with the regional goods movement industry representatives and to inform decision-making related to truck routes and policies.	•			•	
Regularly review interprovincial truck routes, as well as the associated incentives and disincentives for trucks along those routes.				•	•
<b>Wayfinding and Safety</b>					
Review and explore opportunities to improve interprovincial traveller information, such as dynamic signage.	•				•
Continue to review and update response programs and procedures to reduce impact of incidents.					•
<b>Medium Term (1 of 2)</b>					
<b>Governance and Policy</b>					
Integrate vision and objectives of the Strategic Plan into relevant local and regional documents.	•				
Explore opportunities for integrated regional traffic management, such as integration of crossings operations in a centralized traffic operations centre.	•				•
<b>Transit</b>					
Continue to identify needs and opportunities to further improve the integration of the interprovincial transit system and service.	•	•	•	•	•

	One Region	Sustainable	Environment	Economic	Quality of Life
<b>Medium Term (2 of 2)</b>					
<b>Active Transportation</b>					
Conduct a connectivity analysis to ensure the continuity and integration of pedestrian and cycling networks with the interprovincial crossings and identify opportunities for improvement.	•	•			
Regularly conduct pedestrian and cycling safety audits for interprovincial crossings and adjacent routes to identify improvements.		•			•
<b>Transportation Demand Management</b>					
Continue to encourage the use of zero-emission vehicles in collaboration with federal and regional partners.			•		
Explore ways to encourage transition to low-carbon and smaller vehicles for goods movement			•	•	
<b>Goods Movement</b>					
Explore the utilization of urban consolidation centres to reduce truck movements as part of a regional goods movement strategy.				•	•
<b>Long Term</b>					
<b>Transit</b>					
Continue the development of the interprovincial transit loop to support strengthened connectivity within the core area.	•	•		•	
<b>Goods Movement</b>					
Assess the feasibility of integrating interprovincial heavy truck movements as part of any emergent curbside management programs.		•		•	•



## 6 Governance

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The National Capital Region contains a unique governance context that includes a large metropolitan area with several bodies influencing transportation policy, planning and service delivery.

- The federal government, including the National Capital Commission (NCC);
- The provincial governments of Ontario and Quebec, including the respective ministries responsible for transportation;
- The municipal governments of Gatineau and Ottawa, including OC Transpo;
- The Société de transport de l'Outaouais (STO), the local transit agency providing service in Gatineau.

Whereas there is ongoing collaboration on issues of regional importance and the delivery of services, such as through the TRANS Committee and integrated interprovincial transit services between Gatineau and Ottawa, there is a need for mechanisms to ensure that the initiatives of this Strategic Plan are pursued in a collaborative and coordinated fashion. In this regard, there are many steps towards implementing any such changes, which are beyond the responsibility and authority of any single agency.

### **The TRANS Committee:**

#### **A foundation for further regional collaboration**

The TRANS Committee is a joint technical committee on transportation, created in 1979 as a subcommittee of the former Joint Administrative Committee on Planning and Transportation (JACPAT). While the JACPAT ceased its activities in the mid-1990s, TRANS continues as a successful and effective forum for communication and coordination of technical efforts linked to transportation data collection, modelling and coordination of special studies in the National Capital Region.

TRANS is unique in Canada in its multilateral partnership and participation of the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government on transportation data collection, modelling and forecasting.

The administration of TRANS is managed by the City of Ottawa and co-funded by partner agencies through a continuing and renewable agreement that recognizes the legitimate mandate, functions and annual financing of TRANS.

## 6.1 Potential Benefits of Regional Governance

As the region continues to grow, more formalized governance for regional and interprovincial travel could be beneficial to provide a forum for continued collaboration, coordination and cooperation. Partners within the National Capital Region recognize the importance and necessity of having a joint regional perspective on transportation planning activities, as the movement of people and goods cannot be separated along municipal or provincial boundaries.

The implementation of regional governance structures for transportation is common in larger urban centres around the world to overcome challenges such as the coordinated delivery of capital projects and services that cross jurisdictional boundaries, the improvement of traveller journeys on the regional network and coordination of regional transportation with other policies such as land use. Typically, these governance structures are most beneficial where transportation needs and contexts are complex. In Canada, regional transportation governance structures are in place in most large cities, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal.

In the context of the National Capital Region, a new governance forum for more collaborative interprovincial transportation planning and investment would provide opportunities to further improve coordination in the planning, construction and delivery of infrastructure and services critical to interprovincial connectivity. This is because there are unique challenges in the National Capital Region that do not exist elsewhere, primarily the unique role the federal government plays in regional transportation that encompasses two provinces. This warrants further study and discussion to create a “made in the National Capital Region” solution. There are also opportunities and unique successes to build upon, such as the TramGO project, which was proposed by the STO; they will be funded by the governments of Canada and Quebec and will also serve downtown Ottawa. Existing governance structures, such as the NCC Board, whose members include the mayors of Ottawa and Gatineau, can also provide precedents.

Through the development of the Strategic Plan, several principles emerge for interprovincial transportation governance in the National Capital Region.

## 6.2 Regional Governance and the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan does not recommend a model for governance for interprovincial travel or regional transportation in the National Capital Region. However, it does lay initial groundwork by establishing a common vision and objectives, assessing the general needs and gaps, and continuing conversations between National Capital Region agencies.

## 6.3 Principles of Regional Transportation Governance for Interprovincial Travel in the National Capital Region

Through the development of the Strategic Plan, several principles emerge for interprovincial transportation governance in the National Capital Region. These are not prerequisites for a future model; however, they should be considered when exploring and assessing the most suitable approach.

### **These principles include:**

- Establishing a common vision and providing a forum for ongoing collaboration, coordination and cooperation;
- Defining clear roles and responsibilities for the delivery of capital projects, maintenance of infrastructure and service delivery;
- Ensuring that decision-making on local levels is consistent with regional goals and objectives.
- Recognizing that:
  - land use and transportation are inextricably linked, but local planning responsibilities lie with municipalities with unique local contexts as they relate to needs, policies and priorities;
  - efficient interprovincial travel requires planning beyond the crossings of the Ottawa River and needs to include municipal and provincial connections;
  - seamless travel means that jurisdictional boundaries are invisible to the traveller and planning should prioritize the experience of journeys and mobility.

## 6.4 Potential Governance Models

**There are three key roles that can be fulfilled by a regional governance body:**

- transportation planning coordination and collaboration;
- delivery of capital projects;
- ongoing service delivery, operations and maintenance.

The level of involvement by a regional agency varies by local context, such as pre-existing governance structures, the level of need for such an agency, funding and revenue generation options and political will and priorities. The following approaches and levels of involvement can include:

- 1. Coordination only:** The role of the regional body is to serve primarily as a forum for coordination and collaboration between member agencies. This could be in the form of standing or steering committees, coordination tables, or through a memorandum of understanding. The goal of coordination could be to set regional priorities and could also result in the development of a regional plan. In most cases, detailed planning, construction and service delivery are left to the respective agencies. This is currently happening to a degree within the National Capital Region through the TRANS Committee and other interprovincial transportation data collection exercises, travel demand models and studies.
- 2. Coordination and construction:** The role of the regional body is primarily to coordinate the planning and delivery of new capital projects, with operations primarily left to the respective local agencies. The extent of this role is typically defined by the level of investment; the primary funding agency of new capital projects would have an interest in retaining ownership, particularly where costs can be amortized over the life of the infrastructure.
- 3. Targeted full responsibility:** The role of the regional body is to take responsibility for transportation of regional significance. Examples include the identification of a regional network of roads, transit and active transportation with the regional body assuming primary responsibility for planning, design, construction, maintenance and operations. This is similar to the role of regional municipalities, such as York Region and Durham Region in Ontario.
- 4. Full responsibility:** The role of the regional body is to have full responsibility for transportation. This would require substantial effort to transfer these responsibilities to a regional body and potential responsiveness to local issues.

## 6.5 Governance Model Case Studies

### **WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) (Greater Washington, DC)**

- Established in 1967 as part of approval/implementation of regional rail system to serve the national capital.
- Authority is a result of agreement between Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia.
- Coordinates planning and operations of regional transit.
- Operates all transit service in jurisdiction, including the transit fare card and service coordination.
- Federal government only funds capital costs. Operating subsidy for WMATA is shared by local jurisdictions, based on a formula that considers population, ridership and number of stations.
- Governance through a board of directors with representatives from three jurisdictions and federal government.

### **Metrolinx (Greater Toronto, ON)**

- An agency of the Province of Ontario, Metrolinx was established in 2006 to coordinate regional transportation planning in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Metrolinx is also responsible for the operations of GO Transit, UP Express and PRESTO.
- Metrolinx is governed by a board of directors. Priorities are set largely through the Ministry of Transportation and provincial cabinet.
- Leads planning and delivery of regional rapid transit projects. Expansion of LRT and subway will grow Metrolinx's operational mandate; while new lines will be owned by Metrolinx, operations will be contracted through private partnerships or, in Toronto's case, TTC.
- Develops the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in collaboration with municipalities, which supports the province's growth plan for the GTHA. Metrolinx has a statutory influence on municipal policy through planning policy statements and transportation planning policy statements. Municipal official plans and transportation master plans are mandated to conform to the RTP.

### **ARTM (Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain) (Greater Montreal, QC)**

- Established in 2017 to serve as a plan, coordinate, finance and promote public transport services in the Greater Montreal area.
- Develops the strategic plan for public transportation, including coordination of the regional origin-destination surveys.
- Establishes a regional fare system and other regional standards to improve travel, such as regional wayfinding.
- Centralized funding agency to support capital and operational budgets.
- Governed by a board of directors that includes 15 members; 10 members are independent members, not associated with any of the area municipalities and appointed by either the Government of Quebec or the Montreal Metropolitan Community municipalities; five remaining members are the mayors of the cities in the Montreal area.

### **TransLink (Greater Vancouver, BC)**

- Established in 1999 to plan and manage the regional transportation system. Operating subsidiaries for all transit in the Lower Mainland (bus, rail, ferries).
- Develops regional transportation strategy and sub-regional transportation strategies.
- Defines a regional major road network where TransLink contributes to the upkeep and maintenance; collaborates on the planning. Ownership remains with respective municipalities. Cost shares on improvement projects for all modes that are consistent with the vision and RTP.
- Owns and maintains five bridges (a fraction of all the bridges in the greater Vancouver area).
- Governed by a board of directors (day-to-day business) and the Mayors' Council (approves transportation plans and strategies).



Another important part of the monitoring framework is the emergence of new data sources and incorporating them into the monitoring framework as they become available.

## 7 Monitoring Framework

Given that the Strategic Plan is intended to be a flexible living plan, systematic monitoring of progress towards the vision and goals is important to inform future updates. Monitoring will also enable a better understanding of emerging travel trends and aid in planning the most appropriate measures. Moreover, monitoring is essential to help guide investment decisions and track the need for any changes to the Strategic Plan indicators and metrics that help define success.

This chapter proposes a monitoring framework that uses forecasting and monitoring indicators to help predict the impact that new projects will have on interprovincial mobility and maintain an understanding of existing travel conditions in the National Capital Region.

The monitoring plan specifies the source for each type of information while acknowledging that data collection frequency depends on the nature of the information and the intended use. Some indicators are extracted from sources such as the regional household origin-destination survey, the commercial vehicle survey, population and employment databases, multi-modal traffic counts, collision data, or other official plans and communication materials.

Another important part of the monitoring framework is the emergence of new data sources and incorporating them into the monitoring framework as they become available. The increasing use of smartphone data and data from new mobility providers presents an opportunity for a richer understanding of transportation patterns if adequate sampling is available and appropriate privacy protections are in place.

The proposed monitoring indicators are shown in Figure 7-1 and organized by Strategic Plan pillar. The table includes two types of indicators.

- **Forecasting indicators:** These indicators typically come from the traffic models and were used to evaluate future projections during the Strategic Plan development process. They were updated as part of the 2025 technical update to account for new information and changes in trends. These forecasting indicators provide a baseline projection to monitor progress against, allowing the Strategic Plan to adapt and adjust.
- **Monitoring indicators:** These indicators are intended to provide snapshots of progress towards the vision and provide an indication of how implemented strategies are working. The monitoring indicators represent continuous information that is collected over time to track variables that inform on progress for each of the Strategic Plan's pillars.

Indicators were chosen to best measure the objectives, while acknowledging that there cannot always be a perfect match. Furthermore, some of the indicators will require additional refinement and collaboration with National Capital Region agencies to facilitate data collection.

**Figure 7-1: Monitoring Plan Indicators**

<b>Pillar 1: One Region (Transportation Integration)</b> Connectivity of the constituent communities through a coordinated National Capital Region-wide transportation network and a coordinated approach to planning and designing the network		
Objectives	Indicators	Data Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-connected Ottawa and Gatineau downtowns that serve as multi-modal transportation hubs</li> <li>Land use and transportation crossing infrastructure supporting each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average trip length between home and work</li> <li>Interprovincial fare integration</li> <li>Interprovincial connectivity and ridership</li> <li>Updates to municipal transportation plans and official plans</li> <li>Interprovincial public transit accessibility including specialized transit services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRANS model</li> <li>Transit agencies</li> <li>Origin-destination survey and TRANS model</li> <li>Qualitative review of municipal plans, fare integration and connectivity</li> </ul>
<b>Pillar 2: Sustainable Use of Crossing Infrastructure</b> Space-efficient use of existing (and potential future) crossing infrastructure		
Objectives	Indicators	Data Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sustainable and space-efficient mode use for cross-river trips</li> <li>Reduced auto use and overall demand for peak interprovincial trips</li> <li>Improved mobility options are available for cross-river trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volumes and mode shares of cross-river trips across all crossings</li> <li>Average interprovincial auto occupancy</li> <li>Auto vehicle-kilometres travelled for interprovincial trips</li> <li>Average auto and transit travel time in minutes for interprovincial trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRANS model</li> <li>Traffic and vehicle occupancy counts</li> <li>Transit ridership data</li> <li>GPS-collected travel time data for private, commercial and transit vehicles</li> <li>Capital plans</li> </ul>

## Pillar 3: Environment and Climate Change

Minimizing adverse environmental impacts and mitigating and adapting to climate change

Objectives	Indicators	Data Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants from transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenhouse gas emission levels per person-km for interprovincial trips (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent grams from auto and transit)</li> <li>Annual total interprovincial trip emissions (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent kilotons from auto, commercial vehicles and transit)</li> <li>Percent of interprovincial trips made using electric vehicles</li> <li>Percent of transit fleets that are zero-emission vehicles</li> <li>Percent of interprovincial goods moved on low- and zero-emission vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRANS model</li> <li>Vehicle fleet registration data and projected electrification rates</li> <li>Household origin-destination survey</li> <li>Transit agencies</li> <li>Vehicle speed and acceleration data</li> </ul>

## Pillar 4: Economy

Efficient interprovincial travel of people and goods to enhance the National Capital Region's economic well-being

Objectives	Indicators	Data Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced travel time to connect between provincial highway systems</li> <li>• Reduced delay for people and goods crossing the river</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total hours of delay on interprovincial crossings</li> <li>• Volume-to-capacity ratios on all river crossings and selected roads approaching the crossings (morning peak hour)</li> <li>• Average travel time in minutes for vehicles between the provincial highway networks on crossings that allow heavy trucks (morning peak hour)</li> <li>• Percent of interprovincial goods movement traffic destined for Ottawa-Gatineau</li> <li>• Average truck vehicle-kilometres travelled (VKT)</li> <li>• Proportion of truck trips in peak versus off-peak hours</li> <li>• Interprovincial truck travel time reliability</li> <li>• Interprovincial passenger travel time reliability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRANS model</li> <li>• Commercial vehicle survey</li> <li>• Traffic counts</li> <li>• GPS data</li> </ul>

## Pillar 5: Quality of Life

Facilitate access to opportunities for all and reduce the adverse impacts of travel on adjoining communities, especially those caused by heavy goods vehicle traffic

Objectives	Indicators	Data Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved community health and safety in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the crossings</li> <li>• Improved real and perceived traveller safety and comfort</li> <li>• Reduced travel time for cross-river trips</li> <li>• Equitable access to efficient cross-river travel</li> <li>• Increased access to the region's natural spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy truck vehicle-kilometres travelled on local and collector roads</li> <li>• Average morning peak hour auto travel time in minutes for interprovincial trips</li> <li>• Average morning peak hour transit travel time in minutes for interprovincial trips</li> <li>• Average morning peak hour auto and transit travel times in minutes for interprovincial trips originating in low-income traffic zones</li> <li>• Average heavy truck vehicle-kilometres travelled on each crossing</li> <li>• Transit level of service on interprovincial travel routes</li> <li>• Collisions on interprovincial crossings and select approach roads</li> <li>• Sustainable accessibility to major destinations (e.g. Gatineau Park)</li> <li>• Quality of travel experience by all modes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRANS model</li> <li>• GPS data</li> <li>• Commercial vehicle survey</li> <li>• Transit agencies, Ville de Gatineau, City of Ottawa, PSPC, NCC</li> <li>• Spatial data analysis of land use, sociodemographic, and transportation system data</li> <li>• Multi-modal level of service analysis of interprovincial bridges</li> </ul>

# 8 Appendices

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## 8.1 Executive Summary of the Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment

The following is an executive summary of the strategic environmental and economic assessment for the Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossings Plan (LTIICP) update. The full report can be found under separate cover.

The Government of Canada uses strategic environmental and economic assessments (SEEA) to integrate environmental considerations into new policies, plans, and funding decisions, as guided by the Cabinet Directive. The SEEA helps compare the environmental and economic impacts of different options to reduce future risks. The National Capital Commission (NCC) voluntarily applies the Directive's principles to assess its long-term plans.

This SEEA is aligned with the Climate, Nature and Economy Lens' (CNEL) standardized question-based template that requires consideration of climate change (mitigation, adaptation and resiliency), biodiversity and other social, cultural and economic impacts. This process involves a preliminary screening, followed by a more detailed analysis where impacts are noted. As costs have not yet been developed, a strategic economic analysis was not included in this assessment.

The LTIICP outlines a 2050 vision for interprovincial movement of people and goods within the National Capital Region that promotes long-term sustainability, resilience and economic prosperity. The Strategic Plan acknowledges that there are gaps between a trend-based 2050 scenario (baseline) and the desired LTIICP vision and provides key directions and strategies to help reach a desirable future. To develop the LTIICP, various future scenarios were studied for their ability to achieve the Strategic Plan's vision and address gaps and challenges. These scenarios build upon a baseline scenario, which already includes the regional transportation priorities and investments under way or planned by the regional government agencies and stakeholders, to help assess how additional policy measures or infrastructure projects may impact future outcomes.

Future scenarios developed to address the identified gaps fall within two broad categories:

- 1. Making better use of existing crossings:** These scenarios explore measures such as the reconfiguration of vehicular lanes for transit on existing crossings and bold policies to manage interprovincial travel demand, including policies that support active modes of transportation.
- 2. Investing in major infrastructure:** These scenarios explore infrastructure projects such as new interprovincial crossings, a downtown traffic tunnel and the conversion of the future Alexandra Bridge to accommodate a transit loop integrated with the Gatineau-Ottawa tram.

This SEEA focused on understanding the potential environmental and sociocultural impacts of the various scenarios and notes where mitigation measures will need to be considered and/or acted on during implementation of the LTIICP.

## SEEA Results

- Scenarios that promote sustainable travel behaviours through active and transit transportation infrastructure and supporting policies are generally associated with stable or reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Although all scenarios have the potential to be implemented as “net-zero” outcome, renewal or introduction of new infrastructure to support sustainable travel must address the continued reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and the growth of trucking demand.
- Soft measures, such as policies to support the adoption of e-bikes or supporting transport demand management programs could yield substantial benefits in the long term and help the shift towards sustainable modes.
- Thoughtful land use intensification can reduce single-vehicle use by promoting live-work-play communities promoting short-distance, active transportation trips with easy access to transit.
- All scenarios that result in infrastructure construction or reconstruction will result in temporary increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Scenarios that require more complex, large-scale construction such as a new bridge and/or tunnel infrastructure will have a higher potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions on a temporary basis. Construction methods, material selection and restoration of green spaces can offset this temporary impact.

Thoughtful land use intensification can reduce single-vehicle use by promoting live-work-play communities promoting short-distance, active transportation trips with easy access to sustainable transportation.

Allocating more dedicated space for sustainable modes on existing crossings in the core area and limiting the number of general-purpose traffic lanes for all scenarios are two concrete strategies in support of the Strategic Plan's vision, which also limit the risk of inducing future vehicular demand and urban sprawl.

- Without careful planning, scenarios, such as new or expanded roads and bridges, pose risks to biodiversity through land use changes, habitat loss, and fragmentation. Even urban green spaces are vulnerable to infrastructure expansion, which can reduce habitat connectivity and introduce pollution, especially near waterways where runoff may degrade aquatic ecosystems.
- Renewal of existing infrastructure in urban areas will also cause temporary disruptions to wildlife and green spaces that support them. Noise, light, and emissions add further stress. However, the greatest impact occurs when new corridors are established through existing natural areas/corridors and for new river crossings.
- According to the NCC's climate projections and climate vulnerability and risk assessment, key risks that could affect the success of any proposed infrastructure are increased seasonal variation (freeze-thaw cycles), extreme heat, increased precipitation and flooding and extreme weather events. The NCC's Climate Adaptation Plan outlines strategies to address these risks, including protecting green spaces, integrating resilience into policy, and fostering regional partnerships. While all scenarios have the potential to build community resilience to climate impacts, their effectiveness will depend on how well adaptation principles are prescribed and built into future infrastructure planning. Detailed climate vulnerability and risk assessment and the integration of climate-resilient design principles will be necessary to ensure the longevity of new infrastructure.
- Communities in the core area, including those with a low socioeconomic prosperity, are disproportionately affected by truck traffic, leading to noise, air pollution, and associated health impacts. Scenarios that reroute trucks away from these areas offer the greatest potential to contribute to a high quality of life and greater social equity. However, infrastructure projects, such as a potential eastern bridge, will need to be supported by strong policy measures implemented in collaboration with municipal, provincial and federal actors to make sure the beneficial impacts brought by the new infrastructure are maximized.

### **Considerations for decision-makers**

The scenarios were designed with a focus to reduce the potential for increased long-term greenhouse gas emissions and decrease the reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Allocating more dedicated space for sustainable modes on existing crossings in the core area and limiting the number of general-purpose traffic lanes for all scenarios are two concrete strategies in support of the Strategic Plan's vision, which also limit the risk of inducing future vehicular demand and urban sprawl.

Scenarios show that the best possible outcomes for sustainable mobility and high quality of life include strong policy measures to divert heavy trucks away from the downtown core. New infrastructure projects on their own do not fully yield the same benefits. Bold supporting policy measures will be critical to ensure that the vision is achieved and to improve the outcomes from a sustainable mobility and community well-being perspective.

Modelling is based on several assumptions that may impact sustainability outcomes. The transportation and economic environments are constantly changing, and new trends may emerge in the form of new technologies, and post-pandemic return-to-work policies are continuing to evolve. New and emerging trends will need to be monitored and considered in future updates to the Strategic Plan. A flexible framework along with regional collaboration with regional partners will also be required to meet the plan's objectives.

Because this is a long-term plan, it will be important to continue to evaluate new data on current mobility trends, climate projections and technological innovation as it becomes available. Additional strategies to mitigate environmental effects and reduce the risk of climate change on projects will need to be considered as scenarios or components of scenarios become new policy or physical projects. Additional strategies to further mitigate emissions and reduce or introduce positive impacts for ecologically sensitive areas, cultural resources, Indigenous rights, community well-being and other socioeconomic impacts will need to be developed in subsequent phases of implementation.

Additional strategies to further mitigate emissions and reduce or introduce positive impacts for ecologically sensitive areas, cultural resources, Indigenous rights, community well-being and other socioeconomic impacts will need to be developed in subsequent phases of implementation.

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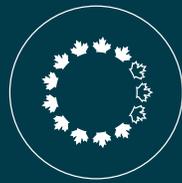
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