

Ontario Releases First Regional Transportation Plan*Province Connecting People and Places in Southwestern Ontario*

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LONDON - Ontario's government is delivering on its commitment to develop regional transportation plans that will connect people and places across the province. Today, Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation, announced that the government is releasing its first draft plan to build a better transportation system that will connect individuals, families and businesses in southwestern Ontario.

"People in southwestern Ontario deserve access to a safe and reliable transportation network that gets them to where they need to go," said Mulroney. "Our plan for southwestern Ontario includes real, practical transportation improvements that will connect our cities, towns, villages and hamlets by improving our roads and highways, improving accessibility, and ensuring bus, rail and local transit services are as seamless as possible."

Ontario's plan, *Connecting the Southwest*, contains more than 40 advancements and strategies, including options for improvements to existing rail corridors and private-sector partnerships to optimize passenger and freight rail. It also includes improvements to southwestern Ontario's highway network and intercommunity bus services.

"People in southwestern Ontario deserve better transportation that gives them safe and reliable access to jobs, their family and friends and the region's many tourist destinations," said Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London. "Our government will continue to put forward smart solutions that respect the value of southwestern Ontario to our province, to our economy and to our quality of life."

The southwestern Ontario transportation plan marks the beginning of comprehensive regional transportation planning for the province, and will be informed by engagement with municipal leaders, Indigenous communities, community leaders, businesses, and transportation experts.

The province is also consulting the public to gather feedback and explore strategies to implement actions in the plan. Ontarians can participate by completing the online survey until March 17, 2020. *Connecting the Southwest* is a living document that will evolve throughout the consultations and as new and innovative technology advances.

"Once again, the Ford Government has shown strong support for our sector. The draft Southwestern Plan contains many items to improve the efficiency of our industry, the safety of the motoring public and commercial drivers while bringing needed changes to commercial vehicle highway clearance," said Stephen Laskowski, President of the Ontario Trucking Association. "Our industry, and by extension, the Province of Ontario will be more competitive through the execution of this effort."

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario is developing regional plans that will help build a better transportation system to keep goods moving across the province, starting with southwestern Ontario. Regional planning is also underway for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Northern and Eastern Ontario.
- Southwestern Ontario is home to 1.6 million people in 88 municipalities, 10 First Nations communities and five Métis Community Councils. In this plan, the region extends from Essex County in the west, Norfolk County in the east and Bruce and Grey Counties in the north.
- Over \$1.1 billion worth of goods travel on southwestern Ontario roads every day.
- In southwestern Ontario, new routes funded by Ontario's Community Transportation Grant program, in combination with existing service, will increase the number of municipalities with access to intercommunity bus service by 58 per cent.
- As part of the plan, the province will establish a task force with municipalities and Indigenous communities that will look at better integrating rail, bus and local public transit across southwestern Ontario to provide people with a seamless travel experience.

LEARN MORE

- [Connecting the Southwest: A Draft Transportation Plan for Southwestern Ontario](#)
- [Have your say on the draft transportation plan for southwestern Ontario](#)

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