

## Preparing for Canada's Growth by Securing Transportation/Utility Corridors

Market access for Canadian products, movement of goods and services, managing growth in regions facing population booms and energy transmission and distribution are all impacted by land-use planning and are, in many regions across the nation, negatively affected by a lack of coordination supported by thoughtful, inclusive, dialogue for aligning these issues to support the sustainable economic development of the nation.

As growing urban centers increasingly play a more important role in the life of the nation, municipalities, and their citizens, are increasingly impacted by the unilateral control of the provinces and territories. Land-use planning and growth management is one of the jurisdictional issues most sensitive to this friction between all levels of government. By the time of the 2001 census, for example, approximately 23 metropolitan areas had a larger population than the province of Prince Edward Island; six of Canada's largest metropolitan areas each had more citizens than any of the four Atlantic provinces; and 79.4% of Canadians lived in urban areas. Just over half (51%) of the nation's population lived in four major urban regions – Ontario's Golden Horseshoe; Montréal and the adjacent region; British Columbia's Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island; and the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor. At the same time, none of the municipalities, whether large or small, could exercise any real fiscal or legislative autonomy.<sup>1</sup>

The need to secure market access for Canadian products or move key goods and services throughout jurisdictions in Canada are also and increasingly impacted by more narrow political interests that do not appear to place economic development of the nation as a priority. Indeed, fragmented vision is impacting the benefits Canadian's receive as a result of getting commodity and energy products to market – Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline Project is a prime example. Market access and domestic distribution or transport of these products rests substantively on regulations or authorities specifically within federal jurisdiction – for example:

- Canada Marine Act
- Canadian Transportation Act
- Maintenance of Railway Operations Act
- Canada Airports Act
- National Energy Board

The Canadian Chambers of Commerce believes the federal government can help pre-empt impending growth, market access and energy distribution and transmission issues by working with all other levels of government in acquiring a radiating network of transportation/utility corridors (TUCs) that can serve a diversity of strategic purposes, now and in the future. This includes support of initiatives such as the Canada Energy Strategy, and coordinating infrastructure builds to support services, supply and distribution to and from remote regions with resource assets and actions address of the growing importance of minimizing land-use impacts that result from a resource-based economy. It also includes endorsing support for private sector initiatives like The Partnership for Resource Trade, a pan-Canadian initiative that is working to build support for reinvestment in its trade infrastructure in order to maintain our resource advantage for the next generations of Canadians.

TUCs are vital for long-term planning between communities. They provide guaranteed corridors for transmission lines, pipelines, regional municipal utilities, telecommunications, and transportation. A network of TUC's will reduce land-use conflicts, improve integration of communities, and encourage the development of a dynamic economic region across Canada that is stable and investment friendly.

A proactive TUC strategy to link all of Canada's urban centres and regions will not only help the Canadian government plan for future growth, it will provide the opportunity to develop a world-class national network of highways, rail lines and transit systems designed to ensure the safe, efficient and timely movement of goods and people – while the jurisdiction of provinces, municipalities and communities must be respected, the federal government has the authority to support the coordination of these linkages using its federal jurisdiction as it relates to the infrastructure needs of such a network.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/bp276-e.htm>

Creating an integrated plan to secure these critical TUC corridors is a fundamental step to proactive national planning, and doing so quickly will save significant funds. Should governments fail to act soon, the cost of acquiring TUCs throughout nation will become increasingly prohibitive and increasingly stymied by intermediary politics that serve neither the national interest nor those of the majority of citizens. Furthermore, lack of action may cause the nation to forgo the opportunity that exists to shape our country's future in such a visionary, and environmentally responsible fashion.

The Canadian Chambers believes the Canadian Government can provide strong leadership and support a common vision and collaborative approach to the economic development of Canada by enabling acquisition of all the future corridors needed for the kind of farsighted planning that will greatly enhance Canadian's quality of life.

### **Recommendations**

That the federal government, in collaboration with provincial, territorial, municipal and First Nations governments:

1. Develop a national transportation/utility corridor plan that will serve to integrate all urban centres and regions in Canada and support a comprehensive transportation/utility system.
2. Implement this proactive plan by working with all levels of government to secure transportation/utility corridor rights of way throughout Canada with the potential for rapid transit, freight networks, telecommunications, regional municipal utilities, transmission lines and pipelines.
3. Ensure that the processes for moving these initiatives forward follow best-practices for consultation with communities, Aboriginal peoples, existing landowners and businesses.
4. Endorse and support the objectives of the Partnership for Resource Trade.