

Goods and People Movement Study
(Submitted by the OCC Borders and Transportation Infrastructure
Committee & the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce)

Issue:

Ontario's transportation system plays a major role in building strong communities and a strong economy for the province. The efficient movement of goods and people within the province and into the United States directly affects Ontario businesses and impacts the province's ability to better compete with other jurisdictions. A comprehensive multi-modal study of goods and people movement for the entire province and border crossings is required to determine what is needed for present and future transportation growth.

Background:

Every year, \$1.2 trillion in goods are transported on Ontario's highways¹ and \$627 billion is shipped across 14 Ontario/U.S land border crossings. \$300 million worth of just-in-time deliveries pass through the Detroit-Windsor alone every day². In addition, hundreds of thousands of vehicles every month, and millions of vehicles every year, traverse our major border crossings at Windsor, Sarnia, Sault Ste. Marie, and Niagara. And these statistics are expected to rise exponentially in the future.

Ensuring Ontario's infrastructure is prepared to handle this growth must be a top priority for the province. The ability to move goods and people easily across the province and across the Ontario/U.S. border plays a critical role in a business decisions to invest and grow in Ontario. Efficient and integrated commercial and passenger travel translates directly to economic prosperity for the province and a high standard of living for Ontario residents.

The key to optimizing existing corridors and planning future transportation capacity is to accurately assess the existing flow of goods and the movement of people within the province and across the border. To date, an integrated, province-wide assessment of this magnitude has never been done. In the context of the intense global competition our business face today, it is more critical now than ever for the province to assess Ontario's overall transportation system.

To date, the province has conducted several focused transportation studies in specific regions such as Niagara (December 2005) Central Ontario (December 2004), Hamilton (June 2005), Peel (August 2004) and Sarnia (January 2007). In addition, several corridor studies of cross-border regions have been conducted

¹ http://www.2ontario.com/welcome/ootr_704.asp

² <http://www.2ontario.com/software/brochures/advancedmanufacturing.asp>

in New York-Quebec (Interstate 87, April 2006) and British Columbia-Washington State (West Kootenay-Northeast Washington, March 2005). But no province-wide, integrated, multi-modal study has been done to date that assesses demographics and economies, freight and traffic movements, highway performance, border crossing conditions.

Not until a single comprehensive and integrated report is conducted, will the province of Ontario be able to devise policy options and a strategy for ensuring an efficient and effective infrastructure system that benefits the north, south, east, west, central and golden horseshoe regions.

Recommendation:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

Commence a comprehensive goods movement study for all of Ontario as well as the vital U.S. trade regions of Detroit-Windsor, Port Huron-Sarnia, Buffalo-Fort Erie and Niagara. As the first step in the creation of an integrated goods and people movement strategy, this study must:

1. Coordinate with federal, provincial and local government agencies in Canada and the U.S. as well as other key stakeholders;
2. Evaluate the goods and people movement in 10, 20 and 30-year timeframes, translating into short, medium and long-term objectives;
3. Review the work of existing relevant goods and people movement studies and initiatives;
4. Review existing and proposed border crossing processing techniques;
5. Focus on present and future trade and travel trends;
6. Evaluate regional demographics, economies, freight and traffic movements, highway performance and border crossing conditions for all modes of transportation—air, truck, rail marine and multi-modal terminals;
7. Quantitatively identify the regions of significant importance to obtain an overview of the businesses that generate freight flows;
8. Identify the present and future issues and challenges to commercial and passenger travel;
9. Evaluation and presentation of recommendations of appropriate performance indicators and monitoring process for the movement of goods by air, examining all options for a key intermodal air gateway for international trade to service northeastern North America.
10. Consider the recommendations put forth by the North American Competitive Council;
11. Identify options for sustained government funding and investment; and
12. Develop policy options and recommendations to address needs.