

## **Goods and People Movement Long-Range Transportation Plan Hamilton Chamber of Commerce**

### **ISSUE:**

Ontario's transportation system is crucial to the economic well-being of Ontario and to the country as a whole. The efficient movement of goods and people, within Ontario and into the U.S. directly, affects business and impacts Ontario's ability to compete with other jurisdictions.

To help facilitate the movement of goods and people, transportation planning at the local, regional and provincial levels is critical. At the present time, Ontario does not have a province-wide transportation plan, and current regional plans do not adequately address the inter-regional movement of goods and people.

A province-wide Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is needed to address the movement of goods and people between regions and across borders.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Ontario is a vast province with diverse regions (economic and otherwise) facing unique transportation challenges. For example, many areas in Northern Ontario require additional transportation capacity to help facilitate goods movement to attract business investment and diversify local economies. In Southern Ontario, particularly in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), rapid population growth, coupled with inadequate investments in transportation infrastructure, has led to crippling congestion. To address unique regional issues, regional transportation plans, such as The Big Move, have been developed.

Ontario's various regions do not exist in isolation. Regions and economic clusters throughout the province are unique and are interconnected. For example, Light Rail Transit vehicles manufactured in Thunder Bay, for use in the GTHA, may have steel sourced from plants in Hamilton or Pittsburgh, with electrical components manufactured in Toronto. Facilitating the efficient movement of these goods between regions is critical for economic sustainability, increased investment and economic growth.

Competing jurisdictions in the U.S. have recognized the need for integration of transportation networks between regions. High-level transportation planning is common in the U.S., with state-wide transportation plans being required by Federal law. State-wide transportation plans span 20 to 30 years in outlook, are updated every five years, and plan for the integration of all modes of transportation.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce believes a province-wide LRTP will contribute to employment and economic growth by:

1. Improving linkages between transportation modes and between regions;
2. Enabling the province to effectively develop and implement policies that improve and better utilize Ontario's extensive network of road, rail, marine and airport facilities; and,
3. Placing Ontario on a level playing field with competing U.S. jurisdictions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

1. Develop a 30 year, province-wide LRTP, to be completed by the fall of 2015. The LRTP should include:
  - a. Stakeholder consultation;
  - b. Short, medium and long-term planning and investment objectives spanning 30 years;
  - c. A financing plan for transportation improvement projects; and
  - d. Quick wins to improve connections between regions.