

THE CANADIAN NORTHERN CORRIDOR: PLANNING FOR NATIONAL PROSPERITY*

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KEY MESSAGES

- Canada's current infrastructure approach is ineffective and piecemeal; projects are planned and implemented in isolation from one another and regulatory and governance frameworks are specifically designed for individual projects and their purposes. This reliance on one-off projects comes with little or no consideration of a long-term national strategy or integration with other infrastructure initiatives. It can also lead to uncertain outcomes for proponents and extended timelines for applications and approvals, deterring private investors and potentially reducing public infrastructure investment.
- Absent comprehensive and integrated planning, the future of Canada's North and near-North will most likely follow the pattern of the last 50 years: a lack of project certainty and continued proposals for one-off investments in roads to service the needs of individual projects or goals without concern for the positive spillovers that could accrue to communities or other users.
- As a concept, the Canadian Northern Corridor (CNC) is multi-modal and involves a set of pre-approved and administered rights-of-way, combined with an institutional framework for its development and operation, improving the economics and decreasing the environmental footprint of infrastructure investments that cross regional boundaries. It allows for integration across multiple infrastructure initiatives, facilitating a long-term national strategy for inter-regional infrastructure.
- By facilitating international market growth and diversification, reducing barriers to interregional trade and improving access to resources the potential benefits to Canadians are large and wide ranging. These include job and income creation, decreases in the cost of living, better accessibility to goods and services, and an overall improvement to Canadians' well-being associated with higher real incomes.
- The establishment of a single comprehensive and integrated body for corridor regulation and operation under a CNC concept could enhance the capacity of local communities to plan and participate in long-term infrastructure projects.

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- The CNC aims to deliver new economic benefits and participation opportunities for Indigenous communities.
- Even regions with high degrees of existing transportation infrastructure connectivity will benefit from reduced congestion and linkages to new regions.
- The purpose of the CNC research program is to provide information and analysis necessary to establish feasibility, desirability and the most advantageous choices for implementation of the corridor concept. The program takes the form of original peer-reviewed academic studies; formal engagement with potentially affected communities, businesses and governments and an accompanying research dissemination strategy.
- The School of Public Policy's CNC research program provides the information base, analysis and evaluation required to assess the feasibility and desirability of establishing permissible corridors in Canada. Integrating formal academic research and a strategy of engagement with potentially impacted communities, the program is working to address key issues such as geographic and engineering feasibility, legal and governance issues, and financial and economic viability.