

CONSTRAINTS IN THE CANADIAN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE GRID

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KEY MESSAGES

- **The corridor as a bottleneck co-ordination mechanism.** The core foundation of corridor development is to maximize the density of flows along an axis by identifying and mitigating bottlenecks. Canadian transport infrastructure grids are not a fully integrated system because of Canada's inherent geographical and economic characteristics. Corridor identification and development becomes a strategy to co-ordinate infrastructure investment.
- **Limited latent demand of northern corridors.** Developing and operating a transport corridor in northern areas is more costly and has much more limited commercial opportunities than a similar corridor in lower latitudes. Population and economic density are unavoidable constraints in corridor development. Outside punctual resource development, there is limited latent demand that a northern corridor could unleash.
- **Development of latitudinal corridors in the medium term and longitudinal corridors in the long term.** Developing a northern corridor is challenging to integrate with the existing transportation infrastructure pattern, while latent demand benefits appear marginal. There are no apparent commercial incentives to build a northern corridor, but segments can be considered on a case-by-case basis. Developing latitudinal corridors that would eventually be reinforced by longitudinal corridors appears to be a more effective strategy.
- **Enduring opposition and governance issues to corridor development.** Different levels of opposition and delays to infrastructure projects undermine the co-ordination potential of corridor development and the commercial viability of crucial infrastructure. Outside specific northern connectors to resources such as mining, energy and logging, the private sector has limited incentives to provide infrastructure or services to low-density areas. Sole private ownership and operation of infrastructure are unlikely unless supported by massive subsidies.