



# Connecting Us: Four Year Action Plan

*UNDER THE 25-YEAR  
TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY*

**2020-2024**







# Connecting Us:

## Four Year Action Plan

### 2020-2024

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#### Vision

Northerners connected to opportunities

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#### Mission

To provide and promote a safe, reliable and sustainable multi-modal transportation system by strengthening connections, capturing opportunities and embracing innovation



## Priority Areas

### 1. Strengthening Connections

Continue to maintain and improve our existing transportation system to enhance the level of service, increase reliability, improve transportation safety and build on partnerships.

### 2. Capturing Opportunities

Continue to expand the transportation system through partnerships to better connect our communities and support our economic development potential.

### 3. Embracing Innovation

Continue to improve the way we do business by improving service delivery, modernizing transportation programs and policies, communicating better with the public to improve awareness and safety, applying new technologies, adapting the system to the effects of climate change and promoting environmental stewardship.



# 19th Legislative Assembly Priority

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to “making strategic infrastructure investments that connect communities, expand the economy or reduce the cost of living” by:

- Advancing the development of the Mackenzie Valley Highway;
- Advancing the development of the Slave Geological Province Corridor; and,
- Modernizing NWT airport infrastructure.

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## Operating Environment

- Transportation system must connect a small population of 45,000 across a large land mass of almost 1.2 million square kilometres.
- Department of Infrastructure is responsible for 2,350 kilometres of all-season highway; 1,465 kilometres of winter roads; 27 airports, three marine terminals, a shipyard, eight specialty tugboats, more than sixty barges, four ferries and more than two hundred light and heavy vehicles.
- Consideration of NWT transportation access: 19 of NWT’s 33 communities are served by an all-season highway system, 10 are served by winter road only and four are serviced by marine or air resupply only.
- Effects of climate change are continuing to adversely impact transportation infrastructure, including 1) increasing the risk of infrastructure failure and supply chain interruption, 2) increasing the cost of construction, operations and maintenance, 3) increasing the need for additional inspection and monitoring, and 4) accelerating the need for capital rehabilitation.
- An underdeveloped and aging transportation system that must be addressed with limited and competing resources.
- Increasing regulatory requirements that drive the need for additional resources.
- High cost of transportation services contributing to the cost of living.
- GNWT owns and operates the sole marine shipping outfit that transports fuel and heavy cargoes to several communities along the Mackenzie River and Arctic Coast. Marine vessels and related assets are aging and maintenance costs are increasing. Changes to regulations governing the shipment of petroleum products on NWT fresh waters call for substantial investment in the GNWT marine cargo fleet.
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions and declines in air passenger travel. As a result, government support was required to continue essential air services.
- Through the *2030 Energy Strategy*, the GNWT has outlined a path towards the development of secure, affordable, and sustainable energy in the NWT, including for transportation



STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS	
Key Activity	Target/Benchmark
Undertake improvement work on NWT Highways 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10, including widening, structural strengthening, resurfacing, and chip sealing	100% completion of planned improvement work by 2024
	Maintain the highway network average Ride Comfort Rating to a minimum of 4
Provide a safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation system to support the social and economic needs of the NWT	Two paved runway condition assessments per year
	Six gravel runway condition assessments per year
	100 percent of highway bridges and bridge-culverts performing to acceptable threshold levels by 2024
	80 percent of condition assessments of highways completed per year
	Improve highway surface conditions with 200/km chipseal overlaid annually
	90% of Daily Airport Inspections Reports completed and submitted

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS	
Key Activity	Target/Benchmark
Secure federal funding to upgrade existing infrastructure in all modes and advance new strategic transportation corridors	Maintain a minimum of five current Airport Capital Assistance Program applications
	Engage federal government in discussions to identify funding opportunities for construction of Mackenzie Valley Highway from Norman Wells to Wrigley
	Prepare updated construction cost estimate to support discussions in 2023
	Engage federal government in discussions to identify funding opportunities for construction of Lockhart All-Season Road (Tibbett Lake to Lockhart Lake) as part of Slave Geological Province Corridor
	Prepare updated cost estimate to support discussions in 2023
	Engage federal government in discussions to identify funding opportunities for regulatory review of remainder of the Slave Geological Province Corridor from Lockhart Lake to the Nunavut border
	Engage federal government in discussions to identify funding opportunities for design and replacement of Dehk'e Frank Channel Bridge
	Engage federal government in discussions to identify funding opportunities for design and construction of Inuvik Runway Extension and Civil Improvements to support DND/NORAD operations and increase utility of airport
Complete ferry upgrades and improvements to ferry sites and landings	Make capital or operational improvements to two ferry assets or sites annually
Undertake a system-wide review of the airport strategic framework to support the development of Airport Master Plans, which will ensure airports meet the needs of communities and regions	System-wide review initiated in 2021-22, with targets to be defined after the results of the review are completed





CAPTURING OPPORTUNITIES	
Key Activity	Target/Benchmark
<b>Advance the development of the Mackenzie Valley Highway (MVH)</b>	Implement completed partnership Memoranda of Understanding with Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated (ongoing)
	Developer's Assessment Report for MVH completed and submitted in Fall 2022
	Complete construction of the Prohibition Creek Access Road by 2024
	Completion of regulatory approvals and final design of the Mount Gaudet Access Road by 2023.
	Complete design and begin construction of Great Bear River Bridge at Tulita by 2023
<b>Advancement of the Slave Geological Province Corridor, including the replacement of the Frank Channel Bridge</b>	Explore the establishment of partnerships with Indigenous governments to advance the development of the Slave Geological Province Corridor (ongoing)
	Baseline data collection completed and Regulatory Review Process initiated for Lockhart All-Season Road by 2024
	Replacement of Dehk'e Frank Channel Bridge completed by 2025



CAPTURING OPPORTUNITIES	
Key Activity	Target/Benchmark
Complete construction of Highway 9 – Tłı̨chǫ Highway	Opening November 2021; Final completion Fall 2022
Complete the Yellowknife Airport Master Plan and seek federal funding for implementation, including airside development and new Air Terminal Building.	Final Yellowknife Airport Master Plan completed in 2022
Construction of new Air Terminal Building, at Inuvik Airport	Complete construction 2025
Construction of runway extension and drainage upgrade at Inuvik Airport	Complete construction 2026
Runway and drainage upgrades in Sachs Harbour, Sambaa K'e, Aklavik, and Hay River Airports	Complete construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aklavik 2020</li> <li>• Hay River 2021</li> <li>• Sambaa K'e 2023</li> <li>• Sachs Harbour 2024</li> </ul>
Modernize airfield lighting throughout the NWT	Two airports per year
Allocate Community Access Program funding to assist with the infrastructure needs of communities	100% of funding allocated to projects Annual Report on program projects and results publicly released
Work with federal, provincial, territorial and local stakeholders to assist in the recovery of air sector following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	Participate in federal/provincial/territorial working group
	Advocate for increased federal investment in national Airport Capital Assistance Program




EMBRACING INNOVATION	
Key Activity/Commitment	Target/Benchmark
Modernize and enhance safety legislation and regulations including Motor Vehicles Act and All-Terrain Vehicles Act	Amendments to the <i>Motor Vehicles Act</i> to address inconsistencies related to impaired driving, medical exams, and third-party information sharing completed in 2022-23
	Policy research and engagement to support approach to comprehensive amendments to the <i>Motor Vehicles Act</i> and <i>All-Terrain Vehicles Act</i> by end of 2023
Review and validate the vision and priorities of Connecting Us: Northwest Territories Transportation Strategy 2015-2040, including undertaking public and Indigenous engagement, to inform the development of the next Action Plan	Review completed, engagement undertaken, and updated action plan released by end of 2024
Develop and implement improved and integrated Road Conditions Reporting System for the NWT	Advance business case for consideration in 2023-24 Information and Communication Technology Capital Planning Cycle
A revised organizational structure for Marine Transportation Services is implemented	Engagement with industry, stakeholders, and communities on proposed new operational model for marine transportation services in 2022
	Decision on operational approach going forward in advance of 2023 shipping season
Provide driver and motor vehicle services that meet the needs of our clients by expanding access to services online	Number and proportion of online services increasing annually

EMBRACING INNOVATION	
Key Activity/Commitment	Target/Benchmark
Develop and implement mandatory entry-level training for obtaining a Class 1 License to enhance road safety in the Northwest Territories.	Program implemented in January 2022
Implement the use of Electronic Logging Devices for purposes of ensuring compliance with Hours of Service Regulations under the Motor Vehicles Act and to support overall road safety.	Legislative amendments made and use of devices implemented by January 2023
Support the electrification of the transportation system, including the purchase of electric vehicles and development of fast charging stations	<p>\$5,000 rebate pilot program through the Arctic Energy Alliance for the purchase of eligible new battery electric vehicles or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (2020-2022).</p> <p>Grants available through the Arctic Energy Alliance and the GHG Grant Program to develop fast charging stations for electric vehicles</p> <p>Program promotion activities (ongoing)</p>
<p>Assess liquid biofuels applications to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation</p> <p>Assess the performance of arctic grade renewable diesel in vehicles when sources become commercially available.</p>	Feasibility report complete in Spring 2021
Implement a fleet telematics system to increase staff and public safety	Complete pilot program and seek funding for program implementation
Develop and implement a renewed Safe Driving Campaign aimed at achieving behavioural changes in NWT drivers	Campaign launched 2022

## Reporting

Progress on many of these activities is reported through the GNWT Business Plan Annual Update and progress reporting on the Mandate of the 19th Assembly. The Department of Infrastructure will also produce a Report Card in 2024 that specifically covers the actions and results of this four-year Transportation Strategy Action Plan.





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