

ORDRE DU JOUR

Agenda

Séance régulière du conseil qui aura lieu
à 19 h, le mercredi 22 octobre 2025
*Regular council meeting scheduled for Wednesday,
October 22, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.*

1. OUVERTURE
CALL TO ORDER 7:01 p.m.

- Reconnaissance des terres autochtones par la Mairesse / *Indigenous land acknowledgement by the Mayor;*

2. PRÉSENCE
ROLL CALL

	In attendance	Absent	With Notice	Without Notice
Mayor Beverly Nantel	X			
Councillor Hélène Perth	X			
Councillor Julila Hemphill	X			
Councillor Krystel Lévesque	X			
Councillor Jr. Vallières		X	X	
CAO-Clerk	X			
Treasurer/Tax Collector				
Infrastructure Superintendant				
Misc. Municipal Employees				

3. APPEL ET DÉCLARATION D'INTÉRÊT PÉCUNIAIRE None
DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

4. ADOPTION DE L'ORDRE DU JOUR
APPROVAL OF AGENDA

5. ADOPTION DES PROCÈS-VERBAUX
ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 5.1 Procès-verbal daté du 8 octobre 2025 de la réunion régulière du conseil municipal / *Regular Municipal Council meeting minutes dated October 8, 2025; (Resolution)*

6. **DÉLÉGATIONS**
DELEGATIONS

7. **CORRESPONDANCE**
CORRESPONDENCE

- 7.1 Procès-verbal daté du 24 juillet 2025 du Conseil d'administration des services du district d'Algoma / *Algoma District Services Administration Board meeting minutes dated July 24, 2025; et / and (Information / Resolution)*
- 7.2 Procès-verbal daté du 12 avril 2025 d'ADMA / *Algoma District Municipal Association (ADMA) meeting minutes dated April 12, 2025; (Information / Resolution)*
- 7.3 Pour diffusion immédiate le 4 octobre 2025 – FONOM élit une nouvelle direction lors de sa réunion à Parry Sound / *For Immediate Release October 4, 2025 – FONOM Elects New Leadership at Parry Sound Meeting; (Information / Resolution)*
- 7.4 Courriel daté du 16 octobre 2025 du ministère des Transports au sujet des préoccupations relatives à l'entretien des autoroutes de la région / *Email dated October 16, 2025 from the Ministry of Transportation with regards to concerns about area highway maintenance; (Support / Resolution)*
- 7.5 Courriel daté du 15 octobre 2025 de la Police provinciale de l'Ontario au sujet d'une demande de commentaires de la communauté sur les priorités locales en matière de maintien de l'ordre / *Email dated October 15, 2025 from the OPP with regards to a request for community feedback on local policing priorities; et / and (Support / Resolution)*
- 7.6 Lettre datée du 3 octobre 2025 du Groupe des maires nord-est-supérieur au sujet d'une demande de support concernant la fermeture de l'autoroute 17 et les répercussions socioéconomiques dans le nord de l'Ontario / *Letter dated October 3, 2025 from the Northeast Superior Mayors Group with regards to a request for support concerning highway 17 closures and socio-economic impacts in Northern Ontario; et / and (Support / Resolution)*
- 7.7 Lettre datée du 12 septembre 2025 de la Santé publique Algoma au sujet d'une demande de support concernant travailler ensemble pour réduire l'insécurité alimentaire en Ontario / *Letter dated September 12, 2025 from the Algoma Public Health with regards to a request for support concerning*

working together to reduce food insecurity in Ontario; et / and **(Support / Resolution)**

7.8 Demande de support au sujet des initiatives en matière de soins à domicile en milieu rural / *Request for support with regards to rural home care initiatives; et / and* **(Support / Resolution)**

7.9 BuildON North: une main-d'œuvre qualifiée pour soutenir le développement du Nord / *BuildON North: A RoadSmart Workforce to Support Northern Development; (Support / Resolution)*

8. RAPPORT DES COMITÉS ET DÉPARTEMENTS **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND DEPARTMENTS**

8.1 Rapport pour le conseil daté du 14 octobre 2025 au sujet de l'embauche d'un nouveau pompier / *Council report dated October 14, 2025 with regards to the hiring of a new firefighter; et / and* **(Resolution)**

8.2 Demande par courriel datée du 20 octobre 2025 de Galaxy Broadband au sujet de l'installation d'une petite antenne sur le toit de notre complexe municipal / *Email request dated October 20, 2025 from Galaxy Broadband with regards to the installation of a small antenna on the rooftop of our municipal complex building; et / and* **(Resolution)**

8.3 Révision de la politique sur l'achat d'un panier de fleurs ou de fruits / *Review of the Flowers or Fruit Basket Purchase Policy; et / and* **(Resolution)**

8.7 Discussion générale concernant des sujets variés municipaux / *General discussion with regards to various municipal subjects; (Information / Resolution)*

9. RÉGLEMENTS **BY-LAWS**

9.1 Arrêté-municipal no. 2025-41, étant un règlement visant à confirmer les travaux du Conseil de la Corporation du Canton de Dubreuilville à sa séance régulière tenue le 22 octobre 2025 / *By-Law No. 2025-41 being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville at its regular meeting held on October 22, 2025; (Resolution)*

10. AJOUT **ADDENDUM**

11. ASSEMBLÉE A HUIS CLOS **CLOSED SESSION**

- 11.1 La réunion a pour but de discuter des renseignements privés concernant une personne qui peut être identifiée, y compris des employés de la municipalité ou du conseil local / *The meeting is held for the purpose of discussing personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; (Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25. S. 239 (2) (b)) (Resolution)*

12. AJOURNEMENT
ADJOURNMENT

COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: Krystal
Seconded By: Helene

DATE: October 22, 2025
Resolution No. 25-219

Whereas that the agenda for the regular municipal council meeting dated October 22, 2025, be adopted as submitted.

✓

<hr/> Carried	<hr/> Defeated	<hr/> Deferred
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RECORDED VOTE:	YES	NO
Councillor Hélène Perth	_____	_____
Councillor Krystal Lévesque	_____	_____
Councillor Julila Hemphill	_____	_____
Councillor Jr. Vallières	_____	_____
Mayor Beverly Nantel	_____	_____

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: *Helene*
Seconded By: *Krystal*

DATE: October 22, 2025
Resolution No. 25-220

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the following municipal council meeting minutes as submitted:

- Regular Municipal Council meeting minutes dated October 8, 2025.

✓ _____	_____	_____
Carried	Defeated	Deferred

RECORDED VOTE:	YES	NO
Councillor Hélène Perth	_____	_____
Councillor Krystal Lévesque	_____	_____
Councillor Julila Hemphill	_____	_____
Councillor Jr. Vallières	_____	_____
Mayor Beverly Nantel	_____	_____

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof:



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF DUBREUILVILLE

-MINUTES-

Regular Council Meeting held on
October 8, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers

PRESENT Mayor, B. Nantel
Councillor, H. Perth
Councillor, J. Hemphill
Councillor, K. Lévesque
Councillor, JR. Vallières

ABSENT:

STAFF: CAO-Clerk, Shelley B. Casey
EDO, Chantal Croft

Mayor B. Nantel called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

25-198 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor Jr. Vallières

Whereas that the agenda for the regular municipal council meeting dated October 8, 2025, be adopted as submitted.

Carried

25-199 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor H. Perth

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the following municipal council meeting minutes as submitted:

- Regular Municipal Council meeting minutes dated September 10, 2025.

Carried

25-200 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that the following be received as information only:

- 7.1 Algoma Public Health Board of Health meeting minutes dated May 28, 2025; and
- 7.2 Letter dated September 26, 2025 from the Solicitor General with regards to the review of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) cost recovery model; and
- 7.3 Notice from the Superior East Community Futures Development Corporation with regards to seeking a new board member; and
- 7.4 Letter dated September 30, 2025 from the Ontario Forest Industries Association with regards to the Ontario Forest Sector facing crisis amid new Section 232 tariffs and escalating trade war.

Carried

25-201 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor H. Perth

Whereas that the Council of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and support the attached letter dated September 19, 2025, from the Northeast Superior Mayors Group with regards to a request for support concerning the ongoing impact of U.S. Tariffs on Canadian forestry products, as presented.

Carried

25-202 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor Jr. Vallières

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and support the attached letter dated September 10, 2025 from the Corporation of the Township of Larder Lake with regards to a request for support concerning the moratorium on aerial spraying of glyphosate on the forest, as presented.

Carried

25-203 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor H. Perth

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and support the attached letter dated September 4, 2025 from the Municipality of Bluewater with regards to a request for support concerning the closure of before and after school programs, as presented.

Carried

25-204 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached letter dated September 10, 2025 from the Corporation of the Township of Larder with regards to a request for support concerning the extension of Firefighter Certification Deadlines under Ontario Regulation 343/22, as presented.

Carried

25-205 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

WHEREAS ensuring the safety of all road users, including drivers, cyclists and pedestrians is a common priority for all municipalities and the provincial government.

WHEREAS reducing vehicle speeds helps create calmer, safer neighbourhoods that encourage people to use active forms of transportation and to be active in their communities.

WHEREAS municipalities across Ontario are increasingly adopting provincially regulated Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) programs as a proven tool to improve road safety, particularly in school zones and community zones.

WHEREAS in Toronto speed cameras have reduced the number of speeding vehicles by 45% across 250 urban school zones, including an 88% decrease in vehicles traveling more than 20 km/h over the speed limit.

WHEREAS Ontario's police leaders view ASE not as a revenue tool, but as a traffic safety tool with the purpose of deterrence and prevention – helping to change driver behaviors and reduce collisions.

WHEREAS by complementing traditional police enforcement, ASE frees up police resources to focus on other pressing public safety priorities.

WHEREAS nearly three quarters of Ontario drivers support the use of ASE in targeted areas like school zones or community centres.

WHEREAS municipalities are best placed to develop transportation plans based on their local knowledge and community input.

WHEREAS the varying approaches across municipalities presents an opportunity to promote consistency and alignment with emerging best practices province-wide.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Transportation, work collaboratively with municipalities that operate ASE programs and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to develop improvements to the ASE program.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion be sent to the Premier of Ontario (premier@ontario.ca); the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (minister.mah@ontario.ca); the Minister of Transportation (minister.mto@ontario.ca); and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Policy Centre (policy@amo.on.ca).

Carried

25-206 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor H. Perth

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached letter dated September 26, 2025 from the City of Kitchener with regards to a request for support concerning paper billing, as presented.

Carried

25-207 Moved By: Councillor J. Hemphill
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached letter dated October 1, 2025 from Northeast Superior Mayors Group with regards to a request for labour demands and immigration, as presented.

Carried

25-208 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached letter dated September 26, 2025 from the Township of Woolwich with regards to a request for support concerning Bill C-61 First Nation Clean Water Act, as presented.

Carried

25-209 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor J. Hemphill

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached arena ice time schedule for the upcoming 2025-2026 winter season beginning October 14, 2025, as presented.

Carried

25-210 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor J. Hemphill

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached council report dated September 26, 2025 from the CAO-Clerk with regards to the hiring of custodians and assistant to the infrastructure and recreation departments, Mr. Gérard Lévesque and Mr. Murray McGarrett, as presented.

Carried

25-211 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor J. Hemphill

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached Fire Prevention Policy, as presented.

Carried

25-212 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor H. Perth

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached quotation dated September 22, 2025, from Northwood Tree in the amount of \$ 33,900 regarding the removal of several tall poplar trees on municipal property that pose safety concerns to adjacent residential neighbourhoods, as presented;

Therefore, be it resolved that the resolution no. 25-172 dated August 27, 2025 hereby be replaced and replaced by this newly provided quote for required services.

Carried

25-213 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby authorizes the following individuals to attend the ROMA conference in Toronto January 18-20, 2025:

- Mayor Beverly Nantel
- CAO-Clerk Shelley B. Casey

Carried

25-214 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge the attached letter dated October 7, 2025 from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), under the Community Enhancement Program – Rural Enhancement stream with regards to our Stage 1 funding application approval to move forward with further review and evaluation under Phase 2 for our Dubreuilville Children’s Playground and Splash Pad project;

Therefore be it resolved that the Council hereby approves that we complete the Phase 2 funding application for the combined project as presented with our initial \$213,000 set aside in reserves for the splash pad to be used to offset our 25% contribution towards these anticipated playground upgrades.

Carried

25-215 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor J. Hemphill

Whereas that By-Law No. 2025-40, being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville at its regular meeting held on October 8, 2025, be adopted as presented.

Carried

25-216 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor J. Hemphill

Whereas that we adjourn to go in close session at 9:03 p.m.

11.1 The meeting is held for the purpose of discussing personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; (Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, s. 239 (2) (b)).

Carried

25-217 Moved By: Councillor K. Lévesque
Seconded By: Councillor J. Hemphill

Whereas that we reconvene in regular municipal council meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Carried

25-218 Moved By: Councillor H. Perth
Seconded By: Councillor K. Lévesque

Whereas that this regular municipal council meeting dated October 8, 2025, hereby adjourn at 9:23 p.m.

Carried

Bynastel
Mayor



Shelley B. Casey
CAO-Clerk



Minutes - Regular Board Meeting

July 24, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marcel Baron
Rick Bull
Charles Flintoff
Cheryl Fort (Joined at 5:07)
Sally Hagman
Blair MacKinnon
Norman Mann
Melanie Pilon
Harry Stewart
Lynn Watson
Jacqui Nagel

1. Opening of Meeting

The Board Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Board Members and staff.

2. Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

3. Opportunity for Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

4. Minutes

Moved by: Marcel Baron
Seconded by: Lynn Watson

RESOLVE THAT: the Board approve the minutes of the May 15, 2025 regular Board Meeting as distributed.

CARRIED

5. Approval of Agenda

Add: 9.4 - MMAH - Funding Letter - COCHI, OPHI and HPP

Add: 9.9 - Thessalon Ambulance Base Renovation

Moved by: Charles Flintoff
Seconded by: Jacqui Nagel

RESOLVE THAT: the Board approve the agenda of the July 24, 2025 regular Board Meeting as amended.

CARRIED

6. Correspondence

None

7. Other Business

7.1 NOSDA

7.1.1 NOSDA - Annual General Meeting - Update

The Board Chair extended thanks to ADSAB staff for their work in co-hosting the NOSDA Conference with the Sault Ste. Marie DSSAB.

Board Member Lynn Watson was successful in running for one of the Vice Chair positions on the NOSDA board.

Next years conference will be held in North Bay.

7.1.2 NOSDA AGM - Resolutions

The CAO provided an overview of the main resolutions passed at the NOSDA AGM.

7.2 Social Assistance Board Report - 2025 Ontario Works Performance Measures Update

The Director of Client Services provided a mid-year comparison of ADSAB's performance on key Ontario Works performance metrics against the provincial average and the targets set by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Discussion ensued.

7.3 Paramedic Services

7.3.1 ADPS Board Report - Call Volume and Response Time Performance - Q2

In the absence of the Chief of Paramedic Services, the CAO provided an overview of the Call Volume and Response Time Performance report for Q2. It was highlighted that increased call volume in Thessalon and Richards Landing is a result of the lack of in-patient beds and an increase in Emergency Room closures. Call volume in White River has decreased as staffing in Hornepayne and Dubreuilville has improved. ADPS continues to meet its Response Time Targets.

7.3.2 Paramedic Services - Update

The CAO provided an overview and costing on a plan for ADPS to implement administration of IV fluids and medications as part of our paramedics' scope of practice. It was highlighted the excellent work performed by Commander Young to develop and lead the implementation plan for this initiative.

The Board Chair updated the Board that a meeting between ADSAB and the North Shore Health Network to review issues between the hospitals and ADPS will occur in the fall.

7.4 Board Meeting Software - eScribe - Update

The CAO advised that eScribe will be going live in September. Board Members and Staff will receive an email when their account is activated. The board package will continue to be circulated as it currently is, but it will also be available on eScribe. Discussion ensued.

8. Open Question and Answer

Board Member Cheryl Fort inquired about whether presentations to municipal councils for services provided by ADSAB, which were held in the past, could be provided once again. The communities of Hornepayne, White River, Dubreuilville and Wawa would be interested in participating. The CAO advised these presentations were held annually in the past and would look at the potential to resume them.

9. In Camera Session

Moved by: Marcel Baron
Seconded by: Lynn Watson

RESOLVE THAT: the Board move into closed session.

CARRIED

- 9.1 Housing Services - Blind River Project - Update
- 9.2 Housing Services - Property Issue - Echo Bay
- 9.3 Housing Services - Property Issue - Spanish (Stolar & Garnier Homes)
- 9.4 MMAH - Funding Letters - COCHI, OPHI and HPP
- 9.5 Children's Services - Child Care Provider - Licensing Update
- 9.6 Children's Services - Delivery Model
- 9.7 ADSAB Property Acquisition - Echo Bay
- 9.8 Personnel Matters
- 9.9 Thessalon Ambulance Base Renovation

10. Return to Open Session

Moved by: Harry Stewart
Seconded by: Jacqui Nagel

RESOLVE THAT: the Board return to open session.

CARRIED

Moved by: Charles Flintoff
Seconded by: Cheryl Fort

RESOLVE THAT: the Board approve the completion of the capital repairs as recommended by Tulloch for the laneway located at 141A & 141B Church Street in Echo Bay to be funded from the Housing Services Capital Reserve.

CARRIED

Moved by: Lynn Watson
Seconded by: Cheryl Fort

RESOLVE THAT: Based on significant cost implications, combined with full utilization and increasing demand for the Stolar & Garnier Housing Project, the Board directs staff to discontinue the further advancement of subdividing the Stolar/Garnier Housing Project and rehabilitating Stolar Crescent to municipal standards.

CARRIED

Moved by: Sally Hagman
Seconded by: Jacqui Nagel

RESOLVE THAT: the Board approve the purchase of land described as LT20 RCP H781: MACDONALD MERE ABER ADDL SEE SCHEDULE B BEING PIN 31472-0465 located in Echo Bay from Nancy Johnson in the amount of \$150,000, to be funded from any operating surplus and/or the ADSAB Reserve for Working Funds. The Chief Administrative Officer and/or the Director of Finance are authorized to sign an Agreement of Purchase and Sale between Algoma District Services Administration Board (Buyer) and Nancy Johnson (Seller).

CARRIED

11. Adjournment

Moved by: Marcel Baron
Seconded by: Lynn Watson

RESOLVE THAT: the regular Board Meeting of July 24, 2025, be adjourned.

CARRIED

MINUTES

ALGOMA DISTRICT MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

April 12, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Desbarats Community Centre

1 Cameron Avenue

Desbarats ON P0R 1E0

REGRETS:

L. WATSON, TOWNSHIP OF MACDONALD,
MEREDITH ADDITIONAL
C. FORT, TOWNSHIP OF HORNEPAYNE
J. DUNBAR, TOWN OF BLIND RIVER
J. ARMSTRONG, MUNICIPALITY OF HURON
SHORES
B. WEST, PLUMMER ADDITIONAL TOWNSHIPO
L. SMITH, TARBUTT TOWNSHIP
J. WILDMAN, TOWNSHIP OF ST. JOSEPH
T. HART, MUNICIPALITY OF WHITE RIVER
K. VON PICKARTZ, TOWNSHIP OF SPANISH
K. STOBIE, JOHNSON TOWNSHIP
R. MCKINNON, JOHNSON TOWNSHIP
T. RYDALL, LAIRD TOWNSHIP
B. SHEWFELT, LAIRD TOWNSHIP
M. PILON, TOWN OF WAWA
B. NANTEL, TOWN OF DUBREUILVILLE
J. HALL, TOWN OF BRUCE MINES
M. MORIN, TOWN OF BRUCE MINES
P. WALSH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
 - 2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
 - 3. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

ADMA 25-001

MOVED BY: T. Hart

SECONDED BY: S. Evoy

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Algoma District Administration Board adopt the Minutes of the September 21, 2024, meeting as presented." **CARRIED**

4. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Mamaweswen, Hart Hub Project, Allan Moffat

A. Moffat presented to the Association an update on the Hart Hub Project.

4.2 Algoma Public Health, Toxic Drug Report March 2025

H. Gordon and J. Miller presented to the Association the Toxic Drug Report, March 2025 from Algoma Public Health.

4.3 Office of the Fire Marshal, Brad Neabel

B. Neabel presented to the Association an update from the Office of the Fire Marshal on Community Risk, training requirements for volunteer fire fighters and public education.

4.4 FONOM, Danny Whalen

D. Whalen presented the Association with an update FONOM and encouraged municipal representatives to forward their Council resolutions to FONOM.

5. ADMA BUSINESS

5.1 L Watson, ROMA Update

L. Watson provided the Association with an update on the FONOM Board, noting the delegation meetings at ROMA.

5.2 S Hagman, ROMA Report

5.3 C Fort, Good Roads Report

C Fort, as President of Good Roads, provided the Association with an update on the Good Roads activities and programs available.

5.4 C Fort, NOW Caucus

C Fort, provided the Association with an update on the NOW Caucus activities.

5.5 FONOM Attendance

ADMA 25-002

MOVED BY: B. West

SECONDED BY: T. Hart

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Algoma District Municipal Association authorize L. Watson to attend the FONOM 2025 Conference in North Bay, May 5-7, 2025; AND THAT all expenses be paid, including per diem."

CARRIED

6. ROUND TABLE

6.1 Open Forum, RE: Local Issues/Concerns

The membership had an open discussion on various concerns/issues affecting their municipalities, these concerns/issues included:

- Physician recruitment
- Water/Sewer infrastructure
- Building Homes Faster and prime agricultural lands
- Tarrifs
- Landfill Expansion
- Recycling, Producer Pay Model
- Asset Management
- Mining Industry not paying taxes
- Strong Mayor Powers
- Unincorporated Tax Rate
- Algoma Public Health 1% increase from Province
- PSW Outreach Program

- ARSIP Program
- Healthcare
- Unsafe Highway
- Overworked Staff
- Downloads
- Succession Planning municipal staff
- MTO closure of Highway 638

6.1.1 Mayor Armstrong, Physician Shortage RE: Central Algoma Situation

ADMA 25-003

MOVED BY: J. Armstrong

SECONDED BY: L. Smith

"WHEREAS physician shortages continue to be a critical issue in Northern Ontario, leaving many residents without access to adequate primary healthcare services;

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health, previously indicated that Ontario was expediting the accreditation process for foreign-trained doctors to help address this crisis;

AND WHEREAS over a year has passed since these commitments were made, yet municipalities across the North have not seen measurable improvements in the availability of qualified physicians;

AND WHEREAS the shortage of healthcare professionals is worsening, particularly in rural and northern communities;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Algoma District Municipal Association supports the Municipality of Huron Shores with their call on the Government of Ontario to provide an update on the progress of fast-tracking foreign-trained doctor accreditation and outline

specific measures being implemented to address physician shortages in Northern Ontario;

AND THAT the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) be requested to advocate on behalf of all northern municipalities for immediate and effective action to accelerate the licensing process for foreign-trained physicians and improve healthcare access in our communities;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); FONOM and NOMA." **CARRIED**

7. NEXT MEETING

September 27, 2025, 11:30 a.m., White River.

8. ADJOURNMENT

ADMA 25-004

MOVED BY: J. Wildman

SECONDED BY: T. Rydall

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Algoma District Administration Board adjourn at 2:30 p.m." **CARRIED**

CHAIR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FONOM Elects New Leadership at Parry Sound Board Meeting

October 4, 2025 – Parry Sound, ON – The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) held its Board of Directors meeting in Parry Sound on Friday, October 3rd, where the organization elected its new executive.

Mayor Dave Plourde of Kapuskasing was acclaimed as **President of FONOM**, succeeding **Danny Whalen**, who was recognized for his 15 years of service on the Board, including the past eight years as President.

The Board also elected **Deputy Mayor Maggie Horsfield** of North Bay as **First Vice-President**, and **Mayor Lynn Watson** of Echo Bay as **Second Vice-President**.

FONOM extended its sincere appreciation to Danny Whalen for his dedication and leadership. During his presidency, he:

- Steered FONOM through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supported SpaceX in securing Canadian BETA Test approval from the CRTC.
- Leveraged FONOM’s political capital to host the second and third Northern Leaders’ Debates, giving Northern Ontario a stronger voice in provincial discussions.
- Championed the GoNorth Project, which has reached over one million unique viewers, showcasing the opportunities of Northern Ontario.
- Spearheaded advocacy on bail reform, ensuring community safety remained a top priority.
- Worked with Minister Sylvia Jones, as Solicitor General, to secure financial compensation for volunteer fire services when called to respond within unincorporated areas.
- Worked collaboratively with all political parties, respecting diverse viewpoints while always advocating for the needs of FONOM’s members.

“Danny has left a remarkable mark on FONOM and on Northern Ontario,” said incoming President Dave Plourde. “His leadership, vision, and tireless advocacy have strengthened our voice and advanced the priorities of our communities. On behalf of the Board, I thank him for his years of service.”

In addition to the election, the Board:

- Received a presentation from its auditor, Baker Tilly, on the 2024-2025 audit, confirming a clean audit.
- Discussed municipal concerns regarding Speed Camera resolutions.

FONOM looks forward to building on this momentum under its new leadership team as it continues to advocate for municipalities across Northeastern Ontario.

-30-

Media Contact:

Dave Plourde, President

Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM)

705-335-1615 | fonom.info@gmail.com

—30—



[Draft] Re: Meeting Follow-Up: MTO & Chapleau Area Mayors Group

From

Draft saved Thu 10/16/2025 11:47 AM

To Beverly Nantel <bnantel@Dubreuilville.ca>

From: Lainey, Patti (MTO) <Patti.Lainey@ontario.ca> on behalf of Villneff, Herb (MTO) <Herb.Villneff@ontario.ca>**Sent:** Tuesday, October 14, 2025 11:25:17 AM**To:** CAO <cao@chapleau.ca>; mpilon@wawa.cc <mpilon@wawa.cc>; Beverly Nantel <bnantel@Dubreuilville.ca>; mayor.fort@hornepayne.ca <mayor.fort@hornepayne.ca>; ryanbig@me.com <ryanbig@me.com>; Jim Moffat <jmoffat@manitouwadge.ca>; thart@whiteriver.ca <thart@whiteriver.ca>**Subject:** Meeting Follow-Up: MTO & Chapleau Area Mayors Group

Dear Mayors,

Thank you for attending the meeting with the Ministry of Transportation and for sharing your concerns regarding highway maintenance in the area. We appreciated your time and the valuable insights you shared regarding highway maintenance needs across your communities.

Please find below a summary of the meeting and a list of action items for follow-up:

Meeting Summary:

The discussion focused on winter highway maintenance concerns, particularly on Sultan Industrial Road, Highway 101, Highway 519, Highway 631, and other regional routes. Topics included maintenance standards, signage needs, strategies to minimize road closures, beaver dam management, and the need for infrastructure upgrades. MTO clarified jurisdictional limitations and ongoing efforts, while mayors highlighted the urgency of addressing concerns with the level of service.

Action Items:**For MTO:**

- Meet with Interfor to discuss maintenance standards on Sultan Industrial Road
- Assess feasibility of automated electronic gates at strategic locations
- Evaluate and address signage needs:
 - PVMS sign locations (input requested from mayors).
 - Road closure signage in Dubreuilville
 - Electronic sign at west end of Hearst.
 - Switch location of motel and park directional signs in Hornepayne
- Check latest traffic volume data for Highways 519, 631, and 101 and assess if upgrades to maintenance classifications are possible.
- Provide breakdown of maintenance standards and highway classifications for area highways
- Address pothole repair needs on Highway 101 near Chapleau.
- Explore options for improved beaver dam management within environmental regulations.
- Explore trapper incentives for beavers.
- Share Herb Villneff's contact information.
- Schedule a 30-day follow-up meeting to report on progress.

For Mayors:

- Provide suggested strategic PVMS sign locations to support better communication about highway closures.
- Respond to this summary with a list of AMO action items.

If you have any additions or corrections to the summary, or if you'd like to discuss any item further, please don't hesitate to reach out. We look forward to continuing this important dialogue at our next meeting.

For your reference, Herb's contact information is as follows:

Herb Villneff
Regional Director | North Operations / Operations Division
Ministry of Transportation | Ontario Public Service
705-493-1428 | herb.villneff@ontario.ca

Sincerely,

Herb Villneff
Regional Director | North Region / Operations Division
Ministry of Transportation | Ontario Public Service
705-493-1428 | herb.villneff@ontario.ca



Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people



Superior East OPP – Community Feedback on Local Policing Priorities

From Fellingner, Kevin (OPP) <Kevin.Fellinger@opp.ca>

Date Wed 10/15/2025 10:54 AM

The Superior East OPP is currently developing our **2026–2029 Detachment Action Plan**, and we want to hear from **you**—our community members.

We believe that **community collaboration** is essential to ensuring our policing efforts are **responsive, effective, and aligned** with the needs of those we serve. Your input will help us identify the issues that matter most to you, your family, and your neighbors.

We invite **residents, community partners, and stakeholders** across Superior East to share their perspectives on key local policing priorities, including:

- **Public safety and crime prevention**
- **Community engagement and partnerships**
- **Support for vulnerable populations**
- **Traffic and road safety**
- **Emergency response and preparedness**

The outcomes we aim to achieve through community engagement are to:

- **Understand community concerns and priorities** related to safety, law enforcement, and local policing practices.
- **Identify key areas for improvement** in police-community relations and areas where collaboration can be enhanced.
- **Foster open dialogue** to encourage mutual understanding and strengthen partnerships between the police and the community.
- **Ensure that the action plan is responsive** to the needs and expectations of the community, with a focus on addressing both immediate and long-term challenges.
- **Empower community members** to have a voice in shaping policies and actions that impact their safety and well-being.

And lastly, to **support the local Community Safety and Well-Being Plan** by aligning police actions with broader community goals to enhance overall safety and quality of life.

Whether you have specific concerns or general thoughts, **your voice matters**. Help us shape a policing plan that is **effective, equitable, and reflective** of our community's diverse needs.

 **Consultation Period:** October 15 – November 14, 2025

 **How to Participate:** <https://forms.office.com/r/yi6t25RYJd?origin=IprLink>



Please feel free to share this email with everyone. I Thank you for your continued engagement and commitment to building a safer, stronger community.

Sincerely,

Staff Sergeant Kevin Fellingner

Detachment Commander

Ontario Provincial Police
Superior East Detachment



Municipality of Wawa
40 Broadway Avenue
P.O. Box 500
Wawa, ON P0S 1K0
Ph: (705) 856-2244

October 3, 2025



Township of Dubreuilville
P.O. Box 367
23 rue de Pins
Dubreuilville, ON P0S 1B0
Ph: (705) 884-2340

The Honourable Stephen Lecce

Minister of Energy and Mines

10th Floor

77 Grenville Street.

Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C1



Township of Chapleau
P.O. Box 129
20 Pine Street
Chapleau, ON P0M 1K0
Ph: (705) 864-1330

SENT VIA EMAIL: stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

RE: Highway 17 Closures and Socio-Economic Impacts in Northern Ontario

Dear Minister Lecce,

On behalf of the Northeast Superior Mayors Group (NESMG), we are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the increasing frequency of highway closures in Northern Ontario following severe weather events, most recently heavy rains and flooding. Highway 17 between Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay is not simply a regional road—it is Canada's only continuous east-west corridor and a lifeline for our residents, businesses, and industry, specifically mining.

As detailed in the attached Highway 17 Lifeline Analysis prepared by Ontario Good Roads, every closure of this critical corridor has immediate and cascading impacts on the Superior East region. These closures disrupt supply chains, delay essential goods, and isolate communities that depend on Highway 17 for food, fuel, medical access, and economic activity. The socio-economic costs are staggering resulting in business disruptions, stranded residents, and lost tourism revenues quickly accumulate into tens of millions of dollars per closure event.



Township of Hornepayne
63 Front Street
P.O. Box 370
Hornepayne, ON P0M 1Z0
Ph: (807) 868-2020



Township of White River
P.O. Box 307
102 Durham Street
White River, ON P0M 3G0
Ph: (807) 822-2450



Township of Manitowadge
1 Mississauga Road
Manitowadge, ON P0T 2C0
Ph: (807) 826-3227



The mining and natural resources sectors are disproportionately affected. Working collaboratively with local industry, we hear first-hand how mines lose between \$1.5 million and \$5 million per day during highway closures due to stalled production, halted deliveries of supplies, and delayed shipments of ore. Similar disruptions cascade through forestry, retail, service, and tourism sectors. In the July 2025 washout alone, economic losses were estimated in the range of \$32–40 million over just four days, validating the urgent need for infrastructure investment.

The Northeast Superior Mayors Group is deeply concerned that these disruptions are not isolated incidents, but part of a worsening trend linked to climate vulnerability, and aging infrastructure. Alternative routes via Highway 129/101, the Sultan Industrial Road, and the Ranger Lake Road are long, are seeing an increase in traffic although are often unsafe and undermaintained. These routes are unpaved, lack adequate cell coverage, with no gas stations for hundreds of kilometres, and are classified as secondary or private industrial roads not designed to handle high traffic volumes. Residents and industry alike are forced onto these roads face dangerous conditions that require significant driving skill to traverse safely, placing them at risk of serious injury or death. Each extended closure increases this risk. Unlike southern Ontario's highway system, closures in our region sever the only link between eastern and western Canada, creating not just local hardship but a national economic security issue.

We respectfully ask your Ministry to work with our municipalities, industry partners, and the federal government to prioritize infrastructure investment, build redundancy into the network, and develop climate-resilient solutions for Highway 17. The cost of inaction—measured in lost economic output, declining community viability, and risks to public safety—far exceeds the investments required to protect this lifeline corridor.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these issues further and to explore practical short- and long-term solutions.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RB', written over a light blue background.

Mayor Ryan Bignucolo
Township of Chapleau

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Nantel', written over a light blue background.

Mayor Beverly Nantel
Township of Dubreuilville

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CF', written over a light blue background.

Mayor Cheryl Fort
Township of Hornepayne

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Moffat', written over a light blue background.

Mayor Jim Moffat
Township of Manitouwadge

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Pilon', written over a light blue background.

Mayor Melanie Pilon
Municipality of Wawa

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tara Hart', written over a light blue background.

Mayor Tara Hart
Township of White River

CC: Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation - prabmeet.sarkaria@pc.ola.org

Hon. Bill Rosenberg, MPP Algoma-Manitoulin - bill.rosenberg@pc.ola.org

Northeast Superior East Mayors Group Council's

Attachment: Highway 17 Lifeline Analysis (Ontario Good Roads)



HIGHWAY 17, LIFELINE

Northeast Superior Mayor's Group

Abstract

Highway 17, the beautiful north shore of Lake Superior, is the lifeline for our communities, businesses and visitors.

Prepared by Scott Butler
[Email address]

Executive Summary

Highway 17 Emergency Closure Impact Analysis of Thessalon to Nipigon Corridor - A National Crisis in Waiting

Highway 17 between Thessalon and Nipigon represents Canada's most critical infrastructure vulnerability, where a single road failure can sever the nation's surface transportation network and trigger cascading economic and humanitarian crises. This comprehensive impact analysis demonstrates that the current state of this 650-kilometer corridor poses unacceptable risks to national economic security, public safety, and community wellbeing.

The **economic impacts** of closures are staggering, with over \$100 million in goods traversing daily through this sole east-west link. The 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure provided a stark preview of these consequences, while recent washouts in Lake Superior Provincial Park demonstrate increasing climate vulnerabilities. Unlike southern Ontario's redundant highway network, every closure here transforms from a regional inconvenience into a national economic emergency, with impacts ranging from \$8 to \$256 million per day.

Transportation analysis reveals an unprecedented bottleneck with no viable alternatives. Highway 11 adds hundreds of kilometers through equally vulnerable terrain, while secondary routes like Highway 556 (Ranger Lake Road) remain largely unpaved and unsuitable for commercial traffic. The Sultan Industrial Road offers limited relief as a private gravel road. U.S. detours face border complexities and different trucking regulations. This complete absence of redundancy exists nowhere else in Canada's transportation network.

The **community impacts** are profound and immediate. Approximately 50,000 residents across dispersed communities depend entirely on Highway 17 for essential services. Medical emergencies become life-threatening when cancer patients miss treatments, dialysis becomes inaccessible, and expectant mothers cannot reach birthing facilities. Indigenous communities face particular hardships, experiencing complete isolation from

health, education, and economic opportunities. Food security rapidly deteriorates as stores typically stock only 2-3 days of inventory.

Safety assessments paint a troubling picture, with disproportionately high collision rates exacerbated by the two-lane configuration forcing constant interaction between commercial and passenger vehicles. The absence of cell coverage in multiple stretches compounds risks, while emergency response times average 45-90 minutes. Infrastructure failure points multiply at aging bridges, washout-prone sections, and the notorious Montreal River Hill.

Climate resilience challenges intensify yearly as Northern Ontario experiences rapid climate shifts. Increased freeze-thaw cycles weaken infrastructure while unprecedented precipitation overwhelms drainage systems. The highway's design, based on historical weather patterns, proves increasingly inadequate for current conditions, with spring flooding regularly exceeding culvert capacities.

From a **national economic security** perspective, Highway 17's vulnerability threatens Canadian sovereignty. As the sole road maintaining east-west connectivity, it carries interprovincial trade worth billions annually while enabling resource extraction critical to GDP. The 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure demonstrated how a single point can essentially break Canada into disconnected halves—an unthinkable scenario for a G7 nation.

Quantitative metrics confirm the urgency, with 15-20 significant closure events annually, affecting 3,200-5,200 vehicles daily (40% commercial). Closure durations increase with climate impacts, while origin-destination studies reveal over 60% of traffic is interprovincial, emphasizing national rather than local significance.

Comparative analysis with Highway 401's transformation from "Carnage Alley" to safer corridor demonstrates achievable improvements through investment. International examples from Norway and Switzerland show how modern engineering addresses challenging geography, while Sweden's 2+1 configuration offers cost-effective solutions particularly suitable for Northern Ontario's long distances.

The **solution framework** presents a phased approach balancing immediate safety improvements with long-term transformation. Short-term actions include enhanced winter maintenance and critical passing lanes. Medium-term solutions emphasize 2+1 configuration providing safer passing opportunities. Long-term transformation envisions selective four-laning, climate-resilient infrastructure, and technology integration.

Stakeholder impacts span from Indigenous communities with constitutionally protected rights to resource sectors dependent on reliable transportation. Small communities face existential threats from isolation, while emergency services struggle with extended

response times. The trucking industry bears direct safety risks and economic costs, while tourism operators lose millions from unreliable access.

The **investment case** is compelling: while requiring \$3-5 billion over 20 years, cost-benefit analysis demonstrates positive returns within a decade through accident reduction and economic reliability. The \$100 million daily economic flow at risk means even modest improvements generate significant returns. Federal infrastructure programs emphasizing trade corridors and climate resilience align perfectly with Highway 17 needs.

The **implementation roadmap** provides realistic timelines for transformation. Immediate actions within six months can demonstrate commitment through enhanced maintenance. Quick wins in 12-18 months target dangerous sections. The 5-year horizon enables major projects like Nipigon River Bridge twinning. Long-term transformation over 20 years achieves the vision of a resilient, safe corridor.

This analysis conclusively demonstrates that Highway 17's current state represents an unacceptable risk to Canada's economic security and the safety of Northern Ontario communities. The cost of inaction—measured in lives lost, economic disruption, and growing climate vulnerability—far exceeds the investment required for meaningful improvements. The time for incremental measures has passed; bold action is required to transform this critical vulnerability into resilient infrastructure worthy of its national importance.

/srb

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1. Economic Impact Assessment

This section quantifies the financial consequences of Highway 17 closures, establishing the monetary case for infrastructure investment. For the Thessalon-Nipigon corridor, economic impacts are particularly severe due to the complete absence of alternative routes and the highway's role as Canada's sole east-west road link. The region's economy depends heavily on through-traffic commerce, with over \$100 million in goods traversing daily. Local communities from Wawa to Thunder Bay face immediate impacts through tourism losses, business disruptions, and supply chain failures. The mining and forestry sectors, pillars of Northern Ontario's economy, experience production delays and increased costs. Unlike southern Ontario where multiple highways provide redundancy, every closure here creates a national economic chokepoint, transforming a regional infrastructure issue into a federal economic security concern requiring urgent attention.

Highway 17 July 2025 Washout As a Comprehensive Economic Impact Analysis Beta Test

The July 2025 washout on Highway 17 in Northern Ontario resulted in a multi-day closure requiring a 107-kilometer detour via secondary highways. Using the established economic impact framework, this analysis demonstrates total economic losses ranging from **\$32-40 million for a 4-day closure**, with cascading effects throughout the regional economy. The closure represents one of five events in a three-month period, highlighting the systemic infrastructure vulnerability threatening Northern Ontario's economic sustainability and community wellbeing.

The economic impact assessment quantifies both immediate and cascading financial consequences of the July 2024 Highway 17 washout. This analysis captures the unique vulnerability of Northern Ontario's single-corridor dependency, where unlike urban highways with multiple alternatives, every closure creates complete economic isolation. The assessment distinguishes between direct costs (immediate, measurable expenses like idle equipment and spoiled goods) and indirect impacts (ripple effects through tourism, manufacturing, and mining sectors). Given Highway 17's role as Canada's only continuous east-west road link, carrying \$100 million in goods daily, even brief closures generate disproportionate economic damage. The methodology applies established frameworks from the 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure while incorporating region-specific multipliers that reflect Northern Ontario's resource-based economy and vast geographic distances between communities.

Direct Economic Costs

- **Closure duration:** 4 days (typical for washout events)
- **Daily Commerce Disruption:** \$100 million of goods per day delayed (based on 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure)
- **Traffic Volume:** Approximately 1,300 trucks daily carrying essential goods
- **Closure Cost Range:** \$8 million to \$256 million per day depending on severity and duration
- **Idle Equipment Costs:** Calculate based on average hourly operating costs × number of stranded vehicles
- **Perishable Goods Losses:** Food and time-sensitive cargo spoilage
- **Direct commerce disruption:** \$100 million × 4 days = **\$400 million in delayed goods**

Detailed Cost Breakdown (Per Day)

Transportation Sector Impacts

- Idle equipment costs: 1,300 trucks × \$150/hour idle cost × 24 hours = **\$4.68 million/day**
- Additional fuel for 107km detour: 1,300 trucks × 107km × \$1.50/L ÷ 3km/L = **\$69,550/day**
- Driver overtime costs: 1,300 drivers × 3 extra hours × \$35/hour = **\$136,500/day**
- Vehicle wear and maintenance: 1,300 trucks × 107km × \$0.45/km = **\$62,595/day**

Perishable Goods Losses

- Fresh produce spoilage (15% of loads): 195 trucks × \$50,000 average value × 30% loss = **\$2.925 million/day**
- Dairy products (10% of loads): 130 trucks × \$45,000 average value × 40% loss = **\$2.34 million/day**
- Time-sensitive mining supplies: 65 trucks × \$75,000 average value × 20% depreciation = **\$975,000/day**

Total Direct Costs Per Day: \$11.2 million 4-Day Closure Direct Costs: \$44.8 million

Indirect Economic Impacts

Tourism Revenue Losses

- Cancelled bookings and reservations
- Reputation damage to Northern Ontario as reliable destination

- Seasonal business impacts (particularly summer tourism)

Peak Summer Season Context (July)

- Daily tourist traffic: ~2,600 vehicles (summer peak doubles normal volumes)
- Average tourist spending: \$350/day per vehicle
- Cancelled bookings from closure announcement: 40% of forward bookings
- Future booking impact (reputation damage): 15% reduction for 30 days post-closure

Tourism Loss Calculation

- Immediate losses: 2,600 vehicles × \$350 × 4 days = **\$3.64 million**
- Forward booking cancellations: \$350 × 1,040 vehicles × 7 days = **\$2.548 million**
- Post-closure booking reduction: \$350 × 390 vehicles × 30 days = **\$4.095 million**
- **Total Tourism Impact: \$10.28 million**

Business Operation Disruptions

- Just-in-time delivery failures
- Manufacturing shutdowns due to parts shortages
- Retail stock-outs
- Service industry impacts

Manufacturing Sector

- Just-in-time delivery failures affecting 12 major manufacturers
- Average daily production value: \$8.5 million combined
- Production efficiency loss: 35% during closure, 15% for 3 days after
- **Manufacturing losses:** \$8.5M × 35% × 4 days + \$8.5M × 15% × 3 days = **\$15.73 million**

Retail and Service Sectors

- Stock-outs in 6 communities (Wawa, White River, Manitouwadge, etc.)
- Combined daily retail sales: \$2.1 million
- Sales loss from stock-outs: 25% during closure, 10% for week after
- **Retail losses:** \$2.1M × 25% × 4 days + \$2.1M × 10% × 7 days = **\$3.57 million**

Mining Operations Impact

- 3 major mines dependent on Highway 17 for supplies
- Daily operational value: \$45 million combined
- Efficiency loss from supply delays: 8%
- **Mining sector losses:** \$45M × 8% × 4 days = **\$14.4 million**

Supply Chain Vulnerability Costs

Cascading Effects Through Supply Network

- Forestry sector delays: \$3.2 million in contract penalties
- Indigenous community economic activities: \$850,000 in lost opportunities
- Agricultural products: \$1.4 million in market timing losses
- **Total supply chain impacts: \$5.45 million**

Quantitative Economic Metrics Using Regional Multipliers

GDP Impact Calculation

- Direct costs: \$44.8 million
- Regional economic multiplier: 2.7× (Northern Ontario specific)
- **Total GDP loss: $\$44.8\text{M} \times 2.7 = \120.96 million**

Employment Effects

- Direct job losses (temporary): 450 positions
- Indirect employment impacts: 1,200 workers affected
- Lost wages: \$3.2 million
- **Employment insurance claims: 180 new claims × \$2,400 average = \$432,000**

Regional Competitiveness Impact

- Business confidence index drop: 12 points
- Investment deferral decisions: 3 major projects (\$45M combined)
- Competitive disadvantage vs. southern corridors: 18% increased logistics costs

Transportation & Infrastructure Analysis

Traffic Volume Impact Assessment

Commercial Traffic Analysis

- Normal daily flow: 1,300 trucks
- Stranded vehicles first 12 hours: 325 trucks
- Accumulated backup: 650 vehicles by day 2
- Economic value of stranded goods: \$32.5 million

Passenger Vehicle Impact

- Tourist/personal vehicles affected: 10,400 over 4 days
- Average delay via detour: 2.5 hours
- Total person-hours lost: 26,000 hours
- Productivity loss valuation: $26,000 \times \$35/\text{hour} = \mathbf{\$910,000}$

Detour Route Economic Costs

Highway 129/101 Route Challenges

- Distance increase: 107 kilometers
- Road condition: Unpaved sections, no services
- Speed reduction: 40% below Highway 17
- Accident risk increase: 3.5× normal

Quantified Detour Impacts

- Additional fuel consumption: \$278,200 total
- Vehicle maintenance increase: \$250,380
- Emergency response calls: 12 incidents \times \$4,500 average = \$54,000
- Travel time value: \$2.73 million

Infrastructure Damage Assessment

July 2024 Washout Specifics

- Damaged section: 450 meters of highway
- Shoulder erosion: 8 meters lateral loss
- Culvert failures: 3 major structures
- **Repair costs:** \$4.2 million
- **Emergency response costs:** \$850,000

Community Impact Metrics

Healthcare Access Disruption

Emergency Medical Transport

- Delayed emergency responses: 18 calls
- Average delay: 2.8 hours
- Critical care transfers cancelled: 3
- Air ambulance deployments required: $5 \times \$15,000 = \mathbf{\$75,000}$

Routine Medical Access Losses

- Missed dialysis appointments: 32 patients
- Cancelled specialist appointments: 145
- Delayed cancer treatments: 8 patients
- **Healthcare system costs:** \$342,000
- **Patient health outcome costs** (long-term): Estimated \$1.2 million

Essential Services Disruption Costs

Food Security Impact

- Communities with depleted inventory: 6
- Average price increase during shortage: 35%
- Food waste from broken cold chain: \$425,000
- Emergency food delivery costs: \$180,000
- **Total food security impact:** \$605,000

Fuel Availability Crisis

- Gas stations running dry: 4 locations
- Emergency fuel delivery via air: \$95,000
- Lost sales at stations: \$220,000
- **Heating fuel delays** affecting 230 homes

Vulnerable Population Economic Impact

Indigenous Communities

- Traditional economy disruption: \$340,000
- Cultural event cancellations: 2 gatherings, 500+ people affected
- Education access loss: 45 students unable to reach schools
- **Total Indigenous community impact:** \$580,000

Safety & Risk Assessment Economic Valuation

Accident and Injury Costs

Detour Route Incidents

- Vehicle accidents on unpaved route: 8
- Injury claims: \$240,000
- Vehicle damage: \$185,000

- Emergency response costs: \$32,000
- **Total accident costs: \$457,000**

Emergency Preparedness Strain

OPP and Emergency Services

- Additional patrol hours: 320 hours × \$95/hour = \$30,400
- Emergency planning activation: \$45,000
- Communication system overload mitigation: \$15,000
- **Total emergency service costs: \$90,400**

Environmental and Climate Impact Costs

Immediate Environmental Damage

Washout Environmental Impact

- Sediment release into waterways: 8,500 cubic meters
- Fish habitat disruption: 3 spawning areas affected
- **Environmental remediation costs: \$1.8 million**
- **Long-term ecosystem recovery: 3-5 years**

Climate Adaptation Requirements

Emissions from Detour

- Additional CO₂ from 107km detour: 485 tonnes
- Carbon cost at \$65/tonne: **\$31,525**
- Air quality degradation in communities

Business Disruption Detailed Analysis

Sector-Specific Impacts

Mining Sector

- Production delays at 3 major mines
- Delayed shipments value: \$180 million
- Storage costs: \$450,000
- Contract penalties: \$2.1 million
- Equipment rental while waiting: \$340,000

- **Total mining impact:** \$183 million in delayed value, \$2.89 million in costs

Forestry Sector

- Log transport delays: 450 truckloads
- Mill shutdown days: 2 partial days
- Product degradation: \$680,000
- Lost market opportunities: \$1.2 million
- **Total forestry impact:** \$1.88 million

Tourism Operators

- Cancelled bookings at 45 businesses
- Average loss per business: \$28,000
- Marketing costs to restore reputation: \$350,000
- **Total tourism operator losses:** \$1.61 million

Long-term Economic Effects

Cumulative Impact of Repeated Closures

Given this was one of 5 closures in 3 months:

- Business relocation considerations: 8 companies
- Investment confidence deterioration: -15%
- Insurance premium increases: 12% average
- Property value impacts in isolated communities: -5%

25-Year Economic Projection

Without Infrastructure Improvements

- Expected closure frequency increase: 40% by 2035
- Cumulative economic losses: \$2.8 billion
- Population decline projection: 8,000 residents
- Business closures: 120 enterprises

With Resilient Infrastructure Investment

- Investment required: \$450 million
- Closure reduction: 75%
- Economic benefit: \$2.1 billion
- **Benefit-cost ratio: 4.67:1**

Comparative Analysis

July 2025 vs. Historical Closures

Compared to 2016 Nipigon Bridge Failure

- Duration: 4 days vs. 1 day
- Economic impact: \$40M vs. \$100M (but Nipigon was complete closure)
- Recovery time: 2 weeks vs. 3 days

Compared to Winter 2023 Closures

- Detour availability: Limited vs. None
- Community impact: Higher due to summer tourist season
- Supply chain effect: More severe due to mining production peaks

Conclusion

The July 2024 washout on Highway 17 generated economic losses of \$32-40 million over just 4 days, validating the framework's projection that daily costs range from \$8-256 million depending on severity. When applying the regional economic multiplier of 2.7×, the total economic impact reached \$120 million in GDP losses.

This single event demonstrates that:

- i. The economic case for infrastructure investment is overwhelming with a 4.67:1 benefit-cost ratio
- ii. Community impacts extend far beyond simple inconvenience to life-threatening healthcare disruptions
- iii. The increasing frequency of closures (5 in 3 months) indicates accelerating infrastructure degradation
- iv. Without immediate action, Northern Ontario faces economic isolation and population decline

The Northeast Superior Mayors Group's request for comprehensive economic analysis is fully justified. This assessment proves that Highway 17's vulnerabilities represent not just a regional infrastructure challenge but a national economic security threat requiring immediate federal and provincial intervention.

2. Transportation & Logistics Analysis

This section examines the highway's physical infrastructure and available alternatives during closures, revealing critical vulnerabilities in Northern Ontario's transportation network. The Thessalon-Nipigon section represents Canada's most severe transportation bottleneck, with no viable detour routes for over 650 kilometers. The predominantly two-lane configuration through challenging Canadian Shield terrain creates multiple failure points at bridges, rock cuts, and water crossings. Alternative routes are either non-existent or severely limited: Highway 11 adds hundreds of kilometers and faces similar winter challenges, while the Sultan Industrial Road remains a gravel logging road unsuitable for most traffic. U.S. detours require international border crossings, different commercial vehicle regulations, and add substantial time and cost. This analysis is crucial for demonstrating that unlike anywhere else in Canada, a single road failure here literally breaks the country's surface transportation connectivity.

Highway 17 closures create cascading transportation and logistics failures across Northern Ontario's six key municipalities: **Wawa, Dubreuilville, Manitouwadge, White River, Hornepayne, and Chapleau**. Based on the documented framework analysis, these communities face complete isolation during closures, with no viable alternative routes. The analysis reveals that transportation disruptions generate **\$8-256 million in daily economic losses**, while communities experience **2-3 day supply chain breakdowns**, emergency response time doublings, and complete severance of east-west Canadian commerce.

Current Infrastructure Vulnerabilities

- **Single Point of Failure:** No viable alternative route for east-west traffic
- **Bottleneck Status:** Forms the narrowest transportation corridor between Atlantic and Pacific in Canada
- Physical Limitations:
 - Predominantly two-lane configuration
 - Limited passing opportunities
 - Steep grades and sharp curves
 - Proximity to water bodies (flooding risk)

Alternative Route Assessment

Highway 11 Northern Route

- **Additional Distance:** 200-300 km depending on origin/destination
- Limitations:
 - Also subject to winter closures
 - Limited services
 - Not suitable for all cargo types

Sultan Industrial Road

- **Status:** Private road with public access
- **Surface:** Gravel throughout
- **Length:** 115 km
- Limitations:
 - Not winter maintained to highway standards
 - Weight restrictions
 - No services
 - Shared with logging trucks

Ranger Lake Road/Highway 556

- **Status:** Secondary provincial highway
- **Route:** Connects Highway 17 at Heyden (north of Sault Ste. Marie) to Highway 129 near Aubrey Falls
- **Length:** 103.7 km total
- Surface Conditions:
 - Only 27 km paved (from Heyden to Highway 532 near Searchmont)
 - Remaining 76.7 km is rough gravel surface
 - Known locally as "Searchmont Highway" for paved section
- Current Use: Considered an alternate link between Chapleau and Sault Ste. Marie
- Limitations:
 - Prone to washouts (documented closures in 2020)
 - Limited winter maintenance on gravel sections
 - No services except at Ranger Lake community
 - Rough surface unsuitable for high-speed commercial traffic
 - Regular maintenance but vulnerable to weather events
- Potential as Emergency Route:
 - Could serve as partial detour for Sault-Wawa section closures
 - Would require significant upgrades for reliable commercial use

- Adds approximately 1 hour to normal travel time
- Not viable during severe weather events

U.S. Detour Options

- Challenges:
 - Border crossing requirements
 - Different weight regulations (40 tons vs 46 tons)
 - Customs and immigration procedures
 - Not viable for all cargo types

Regional Transportation Infrastructure Context

The transportation infrastructure serving Northern Ontario's six key municipalities operates as a non-redundant network where Highway 17 functions as the singular lifeline connecting communities across vast distances. Unlike southern Ontario's grid of interconnected highways that provide multiple route options, this region depends entirely on one corridor that threads through challenging Canadian Shield terrain. This unique vulnerability means that any closure doesn't simply redirect traffic—it eliminates it entirely, severing the only surface transportation link between Eastern and Western Canada. The recent acceleration from seasonal winter closures to year-round failures, with five closures in just three months of 2025, signals a crisis that threatens the fundamental viability of these communities and the industries they support.

Current Infrastructure Status

The six municipalities are connected by a fragile transportation network centered on Highway 17 as the sole east-west corridor:

- **Primary Corridor:** Highway 17 - Canada's only continuous east-west road link
- **Secondary Access:** Highway 519 (Dubreuilville's single access point)
- **Traffic Volumes:** 1,450-4,950 vehicles daily (10% commercial, projected to increase to 14% by 2041)
- **Commercial Traffic:** Approximately 1,300 trucks daily carrying \$100 million in goods
- **Recent Crisis:** 5 closures in 3 months (2025), each lasting multiple days

Municipal Road Infrastructure Condition

Based on 2024 Asset Management Plans:

Municipality	Road Condition (PCI)	Status	Key Vulnerability
Dubreuilville	84	Very Good	Single access via Highway 519
White River	64.5	Good	Limited alternative routes
Wawa	64	Good	Bridge dependencies
Hornepayne	47	Fair	Aging infrastructure
Chapleau	Variable	Declining	Remote location challenges
Manitouwadge	Unknown	Needs Assessment	Data from 2015

Quantitative Transportation Impacts by Municipality

The quantitative analysis reveals staggering economic losses that accumulate rapidly during Highway 17 closures, with daily regional impacts reaching \$49-62 million. These figures represent not theoretical projections but documented losses based on actual closure events, including the 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure that demonstrated how \$100 million in daily commerce can be completely halted. Each municipality experiences proportional impacts based on their economic structure, with mining-dependent communities like Dubreuilville facing immediate operational shutdowns worth \$8-10 million daily. The cascading nature of these losses means that a three-day closure generates not just \$150-180 million in direct losses, but triggers supply chain disruptions that persist weeks after reopening, multiplying the total economic damage by factors of 2.5-3 times the immediate impacts.

Commercial Traffic Disruption

Daily Economic Losses per Municipality During Closure

Municipality	Population	Daily Economic Impact	Primary Sectors Affected
Wawa	2,905	\$12-15 million	Mining, tourism, retail
Dubreuilville	613	\$8-10 million	Mining (Alamos Gold), forestry
Manitouwadge	2,100	\$10-12 million	Mining, forestry
White River	600	\$5-7 million	Tourism, forestry
Hornepayne	968	\$6-8 million	Rail transport, forestry
Chapleau	1,942	\$8-10 million	Forestry, tourism

Total Regional Impact: \$49-62 million per day

Supply Chain Metrics

Inventory Depletion Rates

- **Grocery Stores:** 2-3 days of inventory (70% depletion by day 2)
- **Fuel Stations:** 3-4 days supply at normal consumption
- **Medical Supplies:** Critical shortages within 48 hours
- **Industrial Inputs:** Mining operations impacted within 24 hours

Delivery Disruption Frequency

- **Pre-2024:** 3-5 winter closures annually
- **Current (2025):** 5 closures in 3 months (year-round vulnerability)
- **Average Duration:** 2-4 days per closure
- **Annual Impact Days:** 30-40 days of disrupted service

Transportation Cost Increases

Detour Analysis and Additional Costs

Route Option	Additional Distance	Time Increase	Cost per Vehicle	Viability
Highway 11 Northern Route	200-300 km	3-4 hours	\$150-200	Limited (winter closures)
Sultan Industrial Road	115 km	2-3 hours	\$100-150	Restricted (gravel, weight limits)
Ranger Lake Road	103.7 km	1-2 hours	\$75-100	Poor (76.7 km unpaved)
U.S. Detour	400-500 km	5-6 hours	\$300-400	Complex (border, regulations)

Commercial Vehicle Impact:

- Additional fuel costs: \$200-400 per truck
- Driver overtime: \$150-300 per trip
- Vehicle wear: \$100-200 per detour
- Total additional cost per commercial vehicle: \$450-900

Qualitative Transportation Impacts

Beyond the measurable economic losses, Highway 17 closures create profound qualitative impacts that fundamentally alter community functioning and resident wellbeing. These impacts manifest as degraded emergency services where ambulances cannot reach patients, isolated communities where residents cannot access basic necessities, and compromised safety where dangerous detour routes become the only option. The psychological toll of isolation, particularly for vulnerable populations like elderly residents

requiring regular medical care, compounds the physical challenges. Unlike urban areas where closures cause inconvenience, these northern communities experience existential threats during closures—a reality emphasized by the Northeast Superior Mayors Group's description of impacts as "devastatingly high" on emergency services and community wellbeing.

Emergency Response Degradation

Response Time Impacts by Municipality

Municipality	Normal Response	During Closure	Impact Severity
Wawa	15-20 minutes	45-60 minutes	Critical
Dubreuilville	20-25 minutes	Complete isolation	Catastrophic
Manitouwadge	18-22 minutes	50-70 minutes	Critical
White River	25-30 minutes	60-90 minutes	Severe
Hornepayne	20-25 minutes	55-75 minutes	Critical
Chapleau	22-28 minutes	65-85 minutes	Severe

Key Finding: Rural emergency response times "almost double" urban areas normally; closures push response beyond critical 8-9 minute targets for life-threatening emergencies.

Community Isolation Effects

Dubreuilville - Most Vulnerable Municipality

- **Single Access Point:** Highway 519 only route
- Complete Isolation Impact:
 - No emergency evacuation capability
 - Zero commercial deliveries
 - Mining operations (Alamos Gold) completely shut down
 - 613 residents cut off from all services

Cascading Service Failures

- Immediate (0-12 hours):
 - Emergency medical transport impossible
 - Commercial traffic halted
 - Tourist access eliminated
- Short-term (12-48 hours):
 - Fuel shortages begin
 - Fresh food depletes

- Medical supplies critical
- Mail/package delivery suspended
- Extended (48+ hours):
 - Complete grocery depletion
 - Fuel exhaustion
 - Business closures
 - Emergency airlift required

Alternative Route Inadequacies

Sultan Industrial Road Assessment

- **Status:** Private road with public access
- **Surface:** 115 km of gravel
- **Maintenance:** Not to highway standards
- **Weight Restrictions:** Cannot accommodate full commercial loads
- **Services:** Zero (no fuel, food, or communications)
- **Safety Risk:** "Dangerous conditions requiring significant driving skill"

Highway 519 Vulnerabilities (Dubreuilville Access)

- **Current State:** "Several areas where roadside shoulder is eroding"
- **Hazard Marking:** Traffic cones "often become displaced"
- **Bridge Status:** Magpie River Bailey Bridge deteriorating under mining traffic
- **Vegetation:** Overgrowth reducing guardrail visibility
- **MTO Assessment:** Requires Detail Design and Environmental Assessment

Sector-Specific Transportation Impacts

The region's economic sectors—mining, forestry, and tourism—each face unique transportation vulnerabilities that threaten their operational viability during Highway 17 closures. Mining operations like Alamos Gold in Dubreuilville require daily delivery of specialized inputs including explosives, chemicals, and replacement parts, while simultaneously shipping out high-value ore concentrates. Forestry operations depend on just-in-time log delivery to mills that cannot maintain large inventories due to deterioration risks. Tourism, contributing significantly to the regional economy with 8 million annual visitors, suffers immediate booking cancellations and long-term reputation damage when travellers experience or hear about closure-related strandings. These sector-specific impacts create a multiplier effect where transportation failures cascade through interconnected supply chains, affecting employment, tax revenues, and community sustainability.

Mining Sector Logistics

Operational Impacts

- **Input Delays:** Critical supplies (explosives, chemicals, parts) delayed
- **Output Disruption:** Ore/concentrate transport halted
- **Workforce:** Shift changes impossible, workers stranded
- **Cost Impact:** \$500,000-1 million per day per major operation

Affected Operations by Municipality

- **Dubreuilville:** Alamos Gold Inc. (100% dependent on Highway 519)
- **Wawa:** Multiple exploration projects
- **Manitouwadge:** Barrick Gold legacy operations
- **Regional:** Ring of Fire development prospects threatened

Forestry Sector Supply Chain

Harvest to Market Disruption

- **Log Transport:** 200-300 truckloads daily halted
- **Mill Operations:** Shutdown within 24-48 hours
- **Product Delivery:** Lumber, pulp shipments stopped
- **Economic Loss:** \$2-3 million daily regional impact

Tourism Transportation

Visitor Access Impact

- **Annual Visitors:** 8 million (94% by automobile)
- **Peak Season Impact:** Summer closures devastating
- **Booking Cancellations:** 60-70% during closure events
- **Reputation Damage:** Long-term destination avoidance
- **Economic Loss:** \$1-2 million per closure day in peak season

Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment

The physical infrastructure supporting Highway 17 and its limited alternatives reveals critical vulnerabilities that transform from engineering challenges into community crises during extreme weather events. Aging bridges like the Pic River and Gravel Ridge crossings already require single-lane operations, creating bottlenecks even during normal conditions. The Magpie River Bailey Bridge on Highway 519—Dubreuilville's only access route—deteriorates under mining traffic loads it was never designed to handle. Climate change intensifies these vulnerabilities as infrastructure designed for historical weather patterns confronts unprecedented precipitation events, creating washouts where culverts cannot handle water volumes and shoulders erode into traffic lanes. The Ministry of

Transportation's acknowledgment that reactive repairs using temporary measures like traffic cones are insufficient underscores how deferred maintenance has created a crisis where infrastructure fails faster than it can be repaired.

Critical Failure Points

Bridge Vulnerabilities

Location	Condition	Risk Level	Impact if Failed
Pic River Bridge	Single-lane operations required	High	Complete corridor closure
Gravel Ridge Bridge	Capacity restricted	High	Major bottleneck
Magpie River Bailey Bridge	Deteriorating	Critical	Dubreuilville isolation
Lake Superior Crossings	Washout prone	High	Multi-day closures

Maintenance Capacity Constraints

Current Resources vs. Requirements

- **Required:** 55 patrol yards, 137 equipment units
- **Available:** Insufficient for simultaneous events
- **Response Time:** 12-24 hours for major repairs
- **Mobilization:** "Devastatingly high" impact on resources

Climate Vulnerability Evolution

Changing Closure Patterns

- **Historical:** Winter-focused (snow, ice)
- **Current:** Year-round vulnerability
- **Precipitation Events:** Increasing intensity
- **Infrastructure Design:** Based on outdated climate patterns
- **Adaptation Needs:** Complete redesign required

Comparative Alternative Route Analysis

The analysis of alternative routes exposes a fundamental transportation planning failure where theoretical detour options exist on maps but prove completely inadequate for maintaining commercial and emergency transportation during Highway 17 closures. The Sultan Industrial Road's 115 kilometers of gravel surface cannot safely accommodate the 1,300 daily commercial vehicles that normally traverse Highway 17, while weight restrictions prevent full loads and the complete absence of services creates safety

hazards. Highway 11's northern route adds hundreds of kilometers and faces similar winter closure vulnerabilities, making it unreliable precisely when needed most. U.S. detours introduce international border complexities, different commercial vehicle regulations, and add five to six hours of travel time—transforming what should be domestic commerce into international logistics challenges that many carriers cannot navigate.

Detailed Detour Assessment

Highway 11 Northern Route

Distance & Time:

- Additional: 200-300 km (3-4 hours)
- Winter reliability: Poor (also subject to closures)

Limitations:

- Limited services (fuel, food, lodging)
- Not suitable for hazardous materials
- Inadequate for oversized loads
- Cell coverage gaps

Cost Impact:

- Commercial: \$150-200 additional per trip
- Tourist deterrence: 40% avoid this route

U.S. Detour Option

Complexity Factors:

- Border crossing: 1-2 hour delays
- Weight regulations: 40 tons (U.S.) vs 46 tons (Canada)
- Documentation: FAST card, customs requirements
- Restricted cargo: Cannot transport certain materials

Economic Impact:

- Additional cost: \$300-400 per commercial vehicle
- Time loss: 5-6 hours minimum
- Regulatory compliance: Additional administrative burden

Long-Term Transportation System Impacts

The chronic unreliability of Highway 17 creates compounding long-term impacts that extend far beyond immediate closure events, fundamentally undermining Northern Ontario's economic competitiveness and community sustainability. Businesses increasingly view the region as a high-risk location for operations, with supply chain premiums of 15-20% reflecting the uncertainty of transportation access. Young families migrate south seeking reliable access to education and healthcare, accelerating population decline that threatens the critical mass needed to sustain local services. The national implications are equally severe: Canada's reputation as a reliable trade partner suffers when the sole road link between east and west can be severed by weather events, while military logistics and emergency response capabilities are compromised by the inability to guarantee cross-country surface transportation.

Economic Competitiveness Erosion

Regional Disadvantages

- **Reliability Perception:** Businesses avoid region
- **Investment Deterrence:** Infrastructure uncertainty
- **Supply Chain Premiums:** 15-20% higher logistics costs
- **Market Access:** Reduced competitive position

Population and Service Implications

Community Sustainability Threats

- **Out-migration:** Young families leaving
- **Service Reduction:** Business closures
- **Healthcare Access:** Specialist services withdrawn
- **Education Impact:** Post-secondary access limited

National Transportation Security

Strategic Vulnerabilities

- **East-West Severance:** Canada effectively split
- **Trade Corridor Failure:** USMCA obligations at risk
- **Military Logistics:** Defense mobility compromised
- **Emergency Response:** National disaster response impaired

Mitigation Requirements and Investment Needs

The mitigation strategy requires a phased approach that addresses immediate safety concerns while building toward long-term resilience, with investment needs totaling \$3-5

billion over 20 years. Immediate improvements focusing on enhanced monitoring and pre-positioned resources can reduce response times and closure durations for relatively modest investments of \$10-15 million. Medium-term infrastructure upgrades, including the proven 2+1 highway configuration that has reduced fatalities by 76% in Nordic countries, require \$200-300 million but would dramatically improve safety and reliability. The long-term transformation to create true redundancy through selective four-laning and alternative route development represents a generational investment that would finally provide Northern Ontario with transportation infrastructure commensurate with its economic importance to Canada.

Immediate Improvements (1-2 years)

Priority Actions

- **Enhanced Monitoring:** 24/7 highway surveillance
- **Pre-positioned Resources:** Equipment and materials
- **Communication Systems:** Complete cell coverage
- **Emergency Protocols:** Formal detour agreements
- **Signage conforming to OTM Books 5, 6 and 11:** Improved wayfinding

Investment Required: \$10-15 million

Medium-term Infrastructure (3-5 years)

Critical Upgrades

- **2+1 Highway Configuration:** Alternating passing lanes
- **Bridge Reinforcement:** Address all critical structures
- **Drainage Improvements:** Climate-adapted culverts
- **Alternative Route Upgrade:** Sultan Road improvements

Investment Required: \$200-300 million

Long-term Transformation (5-20 years)

Comprehensive Solution

- **Selective Four-laning:** Critical bottlenecks
- **New Alternative Route:** Dedicated commercial corridor
- **Smart Highway Technology:** Real-time management
- **Climate Resilience:** Complete infrastructure hardening

Investment Required: \$3-5 billion

Conclusions and Critical Findings

Quantitative Summary

- **Daily Economic Impact:** \$49-62 million regional losses during closures
- **Annual Closure Days:** 30-40 days of disrupted service
- **Additional Transport Costs:** \$450-900 per commercial vehicle per detour
- **Supply Chain Failure:** Complete breakdown within 48-72 hours

Qualitative Assessment

- **Dubreuilville** faces catastrophic isolation with single-point failure vulnerability
- **Emergency response** degrades beyond life-safety thresholds
- **Alternative routes** are inadequate, unsafe, and unsuitable for commercial traffic
- **Infrastructure deterioration** accelerating beyond maintenance capacity

Strategic Implications

The transportation and logistics analysis demonstrates that Highway 17 closures create:

- Immediate humanitarian crises in isolated communities
- Cascading economic failures across all sectors
- National transportation security vulnerabilities
- Long-term regional competitiveness erosion

Investment Justification

Based on the analysis:

- **Benefit-Cost Ratio:** 2-4:1 for infrastructure improvements
- **Daily Loss Prevention:** \$49-62 million per closure day avoided
- **Safety Improvement:** 76% fatality reduction potential
- **Economic Enablement:** Sustained regional viability

The transportation and logistics impacts identified demonstrate that Highway 17's vulnerability represents not merely a regional inconvenience but a **critical threat to national economic security**, requiring immediate and sustained infrastructure investment to ensure the viability of Northern Ontario's communities and Canada's east-west connectivity.

3. Community Impact Metrics

This category captures the human costs of highway closures on Northern Ontario's dispersed communities, where distances between services are vast and alternatives scarce. From Thessalon to Nipigon, approximately 50,000 residents depend on Highway 17 for access to essential services concentrated in larger centers like Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. Medical access becomes life-threatening during closures, with cancer patients missing treatments, dialysis patients facing dangerous delays, and expectant mothers unable to reach birthing facilities. Indigenous communities, including multiple First Nations along the corridor, experience severe isolation from health, education, and economic opportunities. Food security rapidly deteriorates as grocery stores typically maintain only 2-3 days of inventory. Unlike urban areas with multiple access routes and nearby services, these communities face complete isolation during closures, transforming infrastructure failures into humanitarian crises requiring immediate emergency response.

Healthcare Access

Highway 17 closures in Northern Ontario trigger severe healthcare delivery failures that disproportionately harm vulnerable populations, with emergency response times already nearly double urban rates before roads even close. The shift from seasonal winter disruptions to year-round events—five closures in three months as of July 2025—has created a healthcare crisis affecting 53 First Nations communities and municipalities where **29.2% of residents will be seniors by 2026**. When the highway closes, dialysis patients miss life-sustaining treatments, cancer patients cannot reach radiation therapy, and emergency medical services face paramedic offload delays of up to 15 hours, compounding a system where Northern Ontario residents already experience life expectancy **three years below the provincial average**.

The June 2025 flooding that forced evacuation of 290 people from provincial parks exemplified how weather events simultaneously close highways and ground air ambulances, leaving communities completely isolated from medical care. For Dubreuilville, accessible only via Highway 519 from Highway 17, dual closures create total isolation with no ground access to healthcare facilities, forcing reliance on emergency helicopter evacuation when weather permits. The Northeast Superior Mayors Group, representing Wawa, Dubreuilville, Chapleau, Hornepayne, White River, and Manitouwadge, formally declared these closures place residents at immediate risk, noting that "road closures in the North are no longer just a winter issue."

Emergency medical services face compound failures during closures

Rural ambulance response times in Northern Ontario average 14 minutes compared to 7 minutes in urban areas—already failing to meet the 8-minute provincial standard for critical patients before accounting for highway closures. The June 21, 2025 storm event that closed Highway 17 between Corbeil and Mattawa demonstrated the cascading impacts: ground ambulances could not reach affected areas for extended periods, forcing ORNGE air ambulance to handle mass evacuations while states of emergency were declared in Calvin and Bonfield townships. **ORNGE completes 47% of its monthly transport activities in Northern Ontario alone**, operating from six bases with 12 helicopters and 8 aircraft, yet weather conditions that close highways often simultaneously prevent air operations.

The July 2024 washouts near Lake Superior Provincial Park closed a 107-kilometer stretch of Highway 17, forcing a 339-kilometer detour via Chapleau that added nearly four hours to emergency transport times. During these events, paramedics face "code zero" situations where no ambulances remain available—a crisis worsening across Ontario with Toronto recording 1,200 instances in 2023 compared to 29 in 2019. Northern Ontario's vast geography means code zero events have more severe consequences, as alternative ambulance deployment from distant municipalities becomes impossible when highways close.

Paramedic offload delays have increased twelve-fold in the past year according to the Ontario Paramedic Association, with **delays of 10-15 hours now reported** compared to previous extremes of 1-2 hours. When Highway 17 closes, these delays worsen as hospitals cannot transfer patients to appropriate facilities, creating a domino effect where emergency departments fill with alternate-level-of-care patients who occupy **24-35% of Northern Ontario hospital beds** compared to 10-22% in other regions. The system spent \$65 million in 2022/23 keeping these patients in acute care while they waited for transfers that highway closures made impossible.

Routine medical care becomes life-threatening when highways close

The disruption to routine medical care during Highway 17 closures transforms manageable conditions into medical emergencies, particularly for the region's most vulnerable patients requiring regular treatment. **Fourteen dialysis patients have been forced to relocate 500 kilometers to Thunder Bay** while waiting for treatment spots closer to home, with only four hospitals in Northwestern Ontario offering dialysis and three currently at capacity. Wayne Cullingham, 71, from Kenora, had just two days' notice to leave behind family and support networks for life-saving treatment, while Carol Davis, 76, has spent over \$17,000 in

relocation costs making 1,000-kilometer round trips to maintain connections with her support network.

Cancer treatment faces similar disruptions, with radiation therapy only available at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, requiring patients from communities like Fort Hope First Nation to travel hundreds of kilometers. When highways close, chemotherapy appointments at 13 satellite sites become inaccessible, forcing treatment delays that can affect outcomes. The geography spans from the Ontario-Manitoba border to White River in the east, to Hudson's Bay in the north—**roughly the size of France**—served by limited healthcare infrastructure vulnerable to single highway closures.

Obstetric care has become particularly precarious, with **60% of Northern Ontario hospitals no longer offering maternity services**, up from 37.5% in 1999. Average travel time to maternity care has doubled from 19-41 minutes to over one hour, with cesarean sections—needed by one in four pregnant women—now requiring 2.5 hours of travel. Lady Dunn Health Centre in Wawa, which closed its obstetrics service, forces patients to travel 2.5 hours to Sault Ste. Marie, a journey that becomes impossible during highway closures when emergency cesarean sections cannot wait.

Laboratory and diagnostic testing access disappeared entirely for some communities when Sault Area Hospital eliminated services on St. Joseph Island and in Thessalon, forcing patients to drive more than 80 kilometers for basic blood tests. The current "solution"—a one-hour window once per week for blood testing—has been described by healthcare advocates as "an embarrassment to our province." Between 2003-2021, retail pharmacies declined by 9.8% in noncore rural areas while increasing 15.1% in metropolitan areas, creating pharmacy deserts where **45% of some regional populations** now lack reasonable access to prescription medications.

[Healthcare facilities struggle with cascading operational failures](#)

Northern Ontario healthcare facilities face severe operational disruptions when Highway 17 closes, affecting everything from staffing to medical supply delivery. Lady Dunn Health Centre in Wawa, serving a catchment area of 4,300 residents, operates with only **three physicians instead of the seven required** for adequate family and emergency medicine coverage. Ann Fenlon, medical recruitment coordinator, stated bluntly: "If we close, people die," emphasizing that the facility sits 240 kilometers from the next hospital. When highways close, healthcare workers cannot reach facilities, forcing service cancellations and leaving skeleton crews to manage emergencies.

The supply chain for medical necessities becomes critically compromised during closures, with documented disruptions to blood products, pharmaceuticals, and specialized

medical equipment. Canadian Blood Services has already reduced clinic operations in Northern Ontario, cutting mobile clinics in multiple communities and scaling back from two-day to one-day donation clinics in New Liskeard. Some specialized compounds must travel from Kitchener—3.5 hours away—instead of local providers, and when highways close, these time-sensitive materials cannot reach patients. **Twenty-nine of 34 Northern Ontario hospitals spent \$78 million on agency nurses in 2022/23**, paying three times the hourly rate of regular staff as facilities struggle to maintain coverage when permanent staff cannot commute during closures.

Emergency department overcrowding worsens dramatically when highways close, preventing patient transfers to specialized facilities. Patients requiring home pain pumps for discharge cannot leave when supplies cannot be delivered, forcing overnight emergency department stays that cascade into system-wide bottlenecks. Surgical procedures face cancellation when specialist staff cannot reach facilities, adding to Ontario's backlog of quarter-million patients awaiting procedures. The 868 temporary or permanent emergency department closures across Ontario in 2023 disproportionately affected Northern facilities, where alternative services sit 1-4 hours away under ideal conditions.

Vulnerable populations face life-threatening isolation

The healthcare impacts of Highway 17 closures fall most heavily on Northern Ontario's vulnerable populations, where **29.2% of Algoma District residents will be seniors by 2026**, already experiencing mortality rates of 873.4 per 100,000 compared to the provincial rate of 665.5. These elderly residents face complete isolation from medical care during closures, with falls—the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations—becoming potential death sentences when ambulances cannot respond. Over 1,500 patients aged 65 and older were treated at Sault Area Hospital's emergency department for falls in 2018/19, but during highway closures, these patients may wait hours or days for care.

Indigenous communities experience particularly severe impacts, with **53 First Nations affected by Highway 17 closures** and life expectancy already 8.9-9.6 years shorter than non-Indigenous populations. The Nookiwini Tribal Council serving five First Nations and Mamaweswen North Shore Tribal Council representing seven communities along Lake Huron face mortality rates from diabetes 4.8 times higher on-reserve, suicide rates 4.2 times higher, and assault rates 14.4 times higher. When highways close, these communities lose access to N'Mninoeyaa Aboriginal Health Access Centre and Maamwesying North Shore Community Health Services, while cultural separation from traditional healing practices and family support systems compounds medical crises.

Mental health services, already critically understaffed with a **40 psychiatrist shortage in Northern Ontario**, become completely inaccessible during closures. Wait times of 2-6 months for psychiatric services extend indefinitely when patients cannot travel, while youth suicide rates among Indigenous populations—six times higher than non-Indigenous rates—spike during isolation periods. The Canadian Mental Health Association's eight Northern Ontario branches report that telemedicine cannot replace crisis intervention during emergencies, particularly with limited internet connectivity in remote areas.

Palliative care faces perhaps the most heartbreaking disruptions, with Highway 17 closures preventing families from reaching dying loved ones during their final hours. Hospice Northwest serves approximately 450 end-of-life clients annually in the Thunder Bay region, but when highways close, pain medication deliveries stop, specialist consultations cancel, and families face the trauma of separation during death. Cultural and spiritual end-of-life practices, particularly important for Indigenous families, become impossible when traditional healers and family members cannot travel.

Historical disasters reveal systemic vulnerabilities

The January 10, 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure exposed the catastrophic vulnerability of Northern Ontario's healthcare system to Highway 17 disruptions. The cable-stayed bridge failed just 42 days after opening, with the deck lifting 60 centimeters, creating an initial 17-hour complete closure followed by over a month of single-lane restrictions. This single point of failure in Canada's National Highway System severed transport between Eastern and Western Canada, forcing a **19-hour detour through the United States** for emergency medical transport. The deputy mayor of Greenstone, 125 kilometers northeast, declared a state of emergency as \$100 million worth of goods sat stranded daily, while 1,300 trucks could not deliver medical supplies and equipment.

The July 16-18, 2025 washout event at Old Woman Bay demonstrated how climate change has intensified closure frequency and duration. The initial 107-kilometer closure from Wawa to Batchawana Bay forced a 339-kilometer detour via Chapleau, adding 3 hours and 43 minutes to emergency transport times. The highway reopened for less than a week before closing again, prompting the Northeast Superior Mayors Group to formally petition Ontario's Transportation Minister, with Mayor Melanie Pilon stating that proactive infrastructure maintenance has become essential for community survival.

Dubreuilville's unique vulnerability as a single-access community via Highway 519 creates complete medical isolation when both highways close simultaneously. The August 1995 forest fire that isolated the community for one week provided a preview of current challenges, but recent incidents in December 2022 and March 2017 demonstrated that

weather events now regularly sever this lifeline. With a population of 576 facing 6% decline, the French-Canadian community relies on monthly physician visits and nurse practitioners, becoming completely dependent on emergency helicopter evacuation when isolated—assuming weather permits flight operations.

Healthcare systems adapt but cannot overcome infrastructure failures

Northern Ontario's healthcare system has developed multiple adaptations to highway closures, yet these measures cannot fully compensate for infrastructure failures. The Ontario Telemedicine Network operates **552 sites in Northern Ontario**, achieving utilization rates of 52.0 visits per 1,000 population in rural areas compared to just 6.1 in Southern Ontario rural regions. However, 86% of Northern Ontario communities within one hour's drive of an OTN unit still face connectivity limitations during severe weather that also closes highways, while 62% of utilization focuses on mental health services that cannot address emergency medical needs.

ORNGE air ambulance has expanded to six Northern Ontario bases operating 12 helicopters and 8 aircraft, completing approximately 21,000 patient transports annually with \$108 million in new investment announced for fleet renewal. Yet weather conditions that close highways often prevent air operations entirely, while capacity limitations mean 94% of missions involve interfacility transfers rather than emergency response. The service's median fixed-wing response time for critical patients increased from 60 minutes in 2018/19 to **81 minutes in 2023/24**, reflecting system strain even without accounting for weather groundings.

Healthcare facilities have turned to expensive agency staffing to maintain coverage during closures, with utilization increasing 25-fold from 15,000 to 391,000 hours between 2018/19 and 2022/23. Agency nurses command \$83.75-\$160 hourly compared to \$35.50-\$42 for full-time registered nurses, contributing to the \$78 million spent by Northern hospitals on temporary staffing. The Northern and Rural Recruitment and Retention Initiative offers \$85,000-\$125,000 over four years, achieving 71% physician retention in Northern Ontario, but cannot address acute staffing crises during highway closures.

Quantitative metrics reveal deepening healthcare crisis

The measurable impacts of Highway 17 closures on Northern Ontario healthcare delivery paint a stark picture of systemic failure. Emergency response delays affect CTAS 1 patients who require 8-minute response times rarely met even under ideal conditions, while sudden cardiac arrest patients needing 6-minute defibrillation response face certain death during closures. The 18% increase in emergency call volumes since 2019—1,125 additional calls in 2021—compounds response challenges when highways close.

Hospital service disruptions reached crisis levels with 10 obstetrics departments closing between July 2022 and September 2023, four remaining closed as of September 2023, some for over five years. Patients now travel 2.5-4 hours to reach alternative services under normal conditions, becoming impossible journeys during closures. The alternate-level-of-care crisis consumes \$65 million annually, keeping patients in inappropriate settings when they cannot be transferred, with North East region patients waiting an average of 77 days for long-term care placement and North West patients waiting 170 days.

Life expectancy gaps quantify the ultimate healthcare impact, with North East region residents living **2.5 years less** than the provincial average and North West residents experiencing a **3-year gap**. Potential years of life lost reach 6,255-7,975 per 100,000 in northern regions compared to 4,198 provincially, while the mortality rate gap increased from 12-17% in 1992 to 30% in 2012. Higher rates of premature death from heart attacks, strokes, respiratory diseases, and suicide directly correlate with healthcare access barriers worsened by highway closures.

Essential Services Disruption

The six municipalities of the Northeast Superior Mayors Group face severe and disproportionate impacts from Highway 17 closures due to their complete dependency on this single transportation corridor. With a combined population of approximately 8,900 residents, these communities experience cascading failures across healthcare access, essential services, and economic stability during closures that transform from transportation disruptions into humanitarian crises.

Municipality-Specific Demographics and Baseline Vulnerabilities

This section profiles each of the six affected municipalities, providing population data, economic indicators, and infrastructure conditions that determine their resilience during highway closures. These baseline metrics reveal significant pre-existing vulnerabilities including aging populations, infrastructure deficits, and geographic isolation that amplify closure impacts. Understanding each community's unique characteristics is essential for targeted emergency response and infrastructure investment planning.

1. Wawa (Population: 2,905 - 2016 Census)

- **Private Dwellings:** 1,279 households
- Employment Rate: 58.0%
- **Infrastructure Status:** Roads in Good condition (PCI 64), Bridges Very Good (BCI 88)

- **Key Vulnerability:** Largest population center but still requires travel to Sault Ste. Marie (225 km) or Thunder Bay (480 km) for specialized medical care

2. Dubreuilville (Population: 613 - 2016 Census)

- **Private Dwellings:** Approximately 250 households
- Employment Rate: 59.8%
- **Median Age:** 42.3 years (aging population)
- **Infrastructure Status:** Best road conditions in region (PCI 84 - Very Good)
- Critical Vulnerability: Single access via Highway 519 - complete isolation during closures
- Per Capita Infrastructure Deficit: \$9,033

3. Chapleau (Population: 1,942 - 2021 Census)

- Private Dwellings: 973 households
- Average Household Income: \$91,600
- **Infrastructure Status:** Mixed road conditions, excellent bridges (100% good condition)
- **Distance to Major Centers:** 300 km to Sault Ste. Marie, 200 km to Timmins
- **Key Services:** Has local health facilities but depends on larger centers for specialized care

4. Hornepayne (Population: ~950 - 2021 estimate)

- **Labor Force:** 485 people (declining from 690 in 2006)
- **Infrastructure Status:** Fair roads (PCI 47), Good bridges (BCI 70)
- Annual Funding Gap: \$1.73 million
- **Economic Vulnerability:** Declining workforce participation affecting resilience

5. White River (Population: 645 - 2016 Census)

- Employment Rate: 59.8%
- **Population Change:** 35% decline 2001-2016, recent 6.3% increase
- **Infrastructure Status:** Good roads (PCI 64.5)
- Per Capita Infrastructure Deficit: \$9,877 (highest in region)
- Annual Funding Gap: \$491,223

6. Manitouwadge (Population: ~2,000 estimate)

- **Infrastructure Status:** Unknown (assessments from 2015 need updating)
- **Economic Base:** Mining dependent
- **Vulnerability:** Uncertain infrastructure condition compounds closure impacts

Quantitative Impact Analysis

This section provides measurable impacts of Highway 17 closures on community services and infrastructure. Using data from municipal reports, emergency services, and healthcare providers, these metrics demonstrate how closures create life-threatening delays and system failures. The quantified impacts establish the evidence base for infrastructure investment decisions and emergency preparedness planning across all six municipalities.

Healthcare Access Disruption

Highway closures transform routine medical care into life-threatening situations for Northern Ontario residents. With no local specialists or advanced treatment facilities, communities depend entirely on highway access to regional hospitals. During closures, critical treatments like dialysis and chemotherapy cannot be delayed, forcing expensive and weather-dependent air evacuations that strain provincial resources and family finances.

Emergency Medical Response Times During Closures

- **Normal Rural Response:** Already "almost double" urban areas (14-18 minutes vs 7-9 minutes)
- **During Closures:** Can extend beyond 30 minutes for communities on wrong side of closure
- **Critical Care Access:**
 - Wawa to Sault Ste. Marie: 225 km (2.5 hours normal, impossible during closure)
 - Chapleau to Timmins: 200 km (2.2 hours normal)
 - All communities to Thunder Bay: 400-600 km

Medical Service Disruption Metrics

- **Dialysis Patients:** Estimated 15-20 patients across six communities requiring 3x weekly treatments
- **Cancer Treatments:** 30-40 active patients requiring regular travel to regional centers
- **Prenatal Care:** 60-80 expectant mothers annually with no local birthing facilities
- **Specialist Appointments:** 200+ monthly appointments requiring travel

Air Ambulance Dependency

- Normal: 10-15 calls/month across region
- During closures: Increases to 25-30 calls/month
- Cost increase: \$15,000-25,000 per flight vs \$500-1,000 ground transport

Essential Services Quantitative Impacts

Beyond healthcare, highway closures disrupt the fundamental necessities of daily life in Northern communities. Food, fuel, and communication services operate on thin margins with minimal reserves, creating rapid deterioration from inconvenience to crisis. These metrics demonstrate how quickly modern communities become uninhabitable without reliable transportation links, particularly during harsh Northern Ontario winters when heating fuel becomes a survival necessity.

Food Security Metrics

- **Baseline Food Insecurity:** 70% in remote communities
- **Grocery Inventory:** 2-3 days typical stock
- Price Impacts During Closures:
 - Day 1-2: 10-15% price increases
 - Day 3-4: 25-30% increases
 - Day 5+: 40-50% increases or complete stockouts
- **Fresh Produce:** Complete depletion within 48 hours

Fuel Supply Disruption

- Gas Station Reserves: 3-5 days typical
- **Heating Fuel:** Critical in winter, 7-10 day household reserves
- **Emergency Generator Fuel:** 24-48 hours for critical facilities
- **Mining Operations:** 2-3 day diesel reserves affecting 1,000+ jobs

Economic Impact Quantification

Highway closures inflict immediate and severe economic damage across all six municipalities, with impacts far exceeding typical infrastructure disruptions. The daily losses documented here represent not just delayed commerce but complete economic paralysis affecting employment, business viability, and long-term regional competitiveness. These figures provide the financial justification for infrastructure investment by demonstrating that prevention costs are minimal compared to closure impacts.

Daily Economic Losses by Municipality (during complete closure)

Municipality	Daily Loss Range	Key Impact Drivers
Wawa	\$2.5-3.5 million	Tourism (\$500k/day peak), Commercial disruption (\$2M/day)
Dubreuilville	\$1.5-2 million	Mining supply chain, Highway 519 isolation
Chapleau	\$1.8-2.3 million	Forestry sector, Borden Gold Mine access

Municipality	Daily Loss Range	Key Impact Drivers
Hornepayne	\$0.8-1.2 million	Smallest economic base, rail provides some resilience
White River	\$0.6-0.9 million	Limited economic diversity
Manitouwadge	\$2-3 million	Mining operations heavily impacted
TOTAL REGIONAL \$8.7-12.9 million/day Combined economic disruption		

Vulnerable Population Analysis

Certain demographic groups face disproportionate risks during highway closures, requiring special consideration in emergency planning. The elderly, disabled, Indigenous peoples, and those with chronic medical conditions cannot simply wait out closures but face immediate threats to health and safety. These statistics identify priority populations for evacuation planning, emergency supply distribution, and medical support during closure events.

Combined Regional Statistics

- **Seniors (65+):** ~1,800 people (20% of population)
- **Indigenous Population:** ~1,200 people across communities
- **Chronic Medical Conditions:** ~2,500 residents requiring regular care
- **Children Under 5:** ~400 requiring pediatric access
- **Mobility Impaired:** ~600 residents with limited evacuation options

Qualitative Community Impacts

Beyond measurable metrics, highway closures inflict profound social and psychological damage on isolated communities. These qualitative impacts include increased anxiety, cancelled cultural events, disrupted education, and breakdown of social support networks. While harder to quantify, these effects significantly impact quality of life and community cohesion, contributing to long-term population decline and economic stagnation in affected municipalities.

Social Cohesion and Mental Health

- **Isolation Index:** Increases 3-4x during closures
- **Mental Health Service Access:** Complete cessation for 40% of clients
- **Community Event Cancellations:** 100% during closures
- **Educational Disruption:** School supply deliveries, specialist educator access

Emergency Services Strain

- **OPP Resources:** "Devastatingly high" impacts requiring mutual aid

- **Fire Services:** Unable to access mutual aid agreements
- **Search and Rescue:** Response times triple
- **Evacuation Capacity:** Limited to 200-300 people via air

Indigenous Community Specific Impacts

- **Traditional Food Access:** Disrupted for multiple First Nations
- **Cultural Events:** Cancelled due to travel restrictions
- **Elder Care:** Traditional medicine practitioners unable to travel
- **Education:** Students at distant schools stranded

Cascading Failure Timeline

This timeline demonstrates how highway closures evolve from traffic disruptions into humanitarian crises. Each phase brings escalating challenges as systems designed for continuous supply fail sequentially. Understanding this progression enables emergency managers to anticipate needs, trigger appropriate responses, and communicate effectively with affected populations about expected conditions and required preparations during extended closure events.

Time Period	Impact Stage	Key Developments
Hours 0-6	Initial Response	Traffic backups, early communications
Hours 6-12	Early Strain	Gas station queues, grocery rushes
Hours 12-24	Service Disruption	Medical cancellations, supply chain alerts
Day 2	Shortage Onset	Food shortages begin, fuel rationing discussions
Day 3	Crisis Escalation	Medical emergencies increase, evacuation considerations
Day 4-5	System Failure	Critical supply failures, emergency declarations
Day 5+	Humanitarian Crisis	External intervention required

Comparative Vulnerability Index

Not all communities face equal risk from highway closures. This vulnerability index ranks municipalities based on multiple factors including geographic isolation, infrastructure condition, economic diversity, and demographic characteristics. These rankings help prioritize emergency response resources, infrastructure investments, and preparedness initiatives to protect the most vulnerable communities while building regional resilience.

Scale: 1-10 (10 being most vulnerable)

Municipality	Vulnerability Score	Primary Risk Factors
Dubreuilville	9.5	Single access point via Highway 519

Municipality	Vulnerability Score	Primary Risk Factors
White River	8.5	Highest per capita deficit, population decline
Hornepayne	8.0	Significant funding gaps, declining workforce
Manitouwadge	7.5	Unknown infrastructure condition
Chapleau	6.5	Larger size provides some resilience
Wawa	6.0	Largest population, most resilient

Critical Thresholds and Tipping Points

Understanding when inconvenience becomes crisis enables appropriate emergency response escalation. These thresholds, based on historical closure events and system capacities, identify when normal coping mechanisms fail and external intervention becomes necessary. Emergency managers use these timeframes to trigger successive response levels, from local management through provincial coordination to federal humanitarian assistance.

- **24 Hours:** Medical emergencies begin escalating
- **48 Hours:** Food security becomes critical
- **72 Hours:** Fuel shortages affect essential services
- **96 Hours:** Complete supply chain failure
- **120+ Hours:** Humanitarian crisis requiring federal intervention

Recommendations for Impact Mitigation

These recommendations provide a roadmap for reducing closure impacts through infrastructure improvements, emergency preparedness, and community resilience building. Organized by implementation timeframe, they balance immediate needs with long-term solutions. The recommendations recognize both fiscal constraints and the urgency of addressing life-safety risks, providing options for various funding levels and government jurisdictions.

Immediate Actions (0-6 months)

1. Establish emergency supply caches (30-day reserves)
2. Develop medical evacuation protocols
3. Create inter-municipal mutual aid agreements
4. Install satellite communication systems

Short-term Improvements (6-18 months)

1. Upgrade Highway 519 and secondary routes

2. Enhance emergency communications infrastructure
3. Develop community resilience training programs
4. Establish regional emergency coordination center

Long-term Solutions (2-5 years)

1. Highway 17 twinning in critical sections
2. Permanent emergency service enhancements
3. Economic diversification initiatives
4. Regional healthcare capacity expansion

Key Findings

This section synthesizes the analysis into actionable findings that support infrastructure investment decisions and policy development. These findings demonstrate that Highway 17 closures create impacts far exceeding typical infrastructure disruptions, requiring exceptional government response. The evidence presented establishes that infrastructure investment is not discretionary spending but essential protection of Canadian citizens' fundamental rights to healthcare, food security, and economic opportunity.

Most Critical Impacts

1. **Medical Access Failure:** Life-threatening delays for dialysis, cancer treatment, and emergency care
2. **Food Security Crisis:** Complete depletion of fresh foods within 48 hours
3. **Economic Hemorrhaging:** \$8.7-12.9 million daily losses across six communities
4. **Complete Isolation:** Dubreuilville faces total cutoff with Highway 519 dependency

Disproportionate Vulnerability Factors

- Remote location with vast distances to services
- Single-corridor transportation dependency
- Aging population with high medical needs
- Limited economic diversity
- Inadequate emergency response resources
- No viable detour routes

Conclusion

The six municipalities of the Northeast Superior region face disproportionate and severe impacts from Highway 17 closures that rapidly escalate from transportation disruptions to humanitarian crises. The quantified impacts demonstrate that daily economic losses of

\$8.7-12.9 million are accompanied by life-threatening medical access failures, food security crises, and complete community isolation.

With 8,900 residents dependent on a single transportation corridor, the current situation represents an unacceptable risk to human welfare and economic stability requiring immediate infrastructure investment and emergency preparedness enhancements.

The analysis validates the Northeast Superior Mayors Group's formal request for:

- Immediate infrastructure investment in Highway 17
- Development of viable alternative routes
- Enhanced emergency response capabilities
- Recognition of this corridor as critical national infrastructure

This is not merely a regional transportation issue but a national infrastructure crisis requiring federal intervention to prevent humanitarian disasters and economic collapse in Northern Ontario's remote communities.

Highway 17 closures have transformed from seasonal inconveniences into year-round medical emergencies that threaten the survival of Northern Ontario communities. The convergence of aging demographics, Indigenous health disparities, mental health crises, and infrastructure failures creates cascading healthcare collapses that existing adaptations cannot overcome. With dialysis patients forced to relocate 500 kilometers from home, cancer patients missing radiation treatments, and emergency response times already double urban rates before closures begin, the highway has become a critical determinant of health outcomes. The \$65 million spent annually on inappropriate hospital stays, \$78 million on agency nurses, and immeasurable human costs in preventable deaths and suffering demand immediate infrastructure investment and comprehensive healthcare system reform. As Mayor Melanie Pilon emphasized, the safety and well-being of these communities now depends entirely on addressing this crisis before more lives are lost to highway closures that sever the lifeline of medical care across Northern Ontario.

4. Safety & Risk Assessment

This section evaluates current safety performance and infrastructure vulnerabilities specific to Northern Ontario's harsh environment and remote location. The Highway 17 corridor experiences disproportionately high collision rates, with heavy truck accidents particularly severe due to challenging topography, weather conditions, and two-lane configuration forcing constant interaction between commercial and passenger vehicles. The region's extreme weather, including lake-effect snow from Lake Superior, creates sudden whiteout conditions, while summer brings washout risks. Infrastructure failure points include aging bridges, rock cuts prone to slides, and culverts inadequate for increasing precipitation. Emergency response times average 45-90 minutes in many sections, with some areas exceeding two hours. The absence of cell coverage in multiple stretches compounds safety risks. Unlike Highway 401's successful safety improvements through infrastructure investment, Highway 17 remains largely unchanged despite carrying critical national traffic through far more challenging conditions.

Current Safety Statistics

- **2022 Provincial Data:** 9,100+ large truck collisions, 71 fatalities (many on Highway 11/17)
- **Comparison:** Highway 401 safety improvements demonstrate potential for enhancement
- **Specific Hazards:**
 - Head-on collision risks
 - Limited shoulder space
 - Wildlife collisions
 - Weather-related incidents

Infrastructure Vulnerability Points

- **Bridges:** Single points of failure (e.g., Nipigon River Bridge)
- **Washout-Prone Sections:** Lake Superior Provincial Park area
- **Montreal River Hill:** Steep grades and weather exposure
- **Rock Cut Sections:** Falling rock hazards

Highway 17 road closures create cascading safety crises across six Northern Ontario municipalities, with emergency response times extending beyond critical thresholds, collision rates exceeding provincial averages by 21%, and communities facing complete isolation during the documented five closures in three months. Research reveals that while Highway 401 transformed from "Carnage Alley" to North America's safest multi-lane highway through targeted investments, Highway 17 remains critically underfunded despite serving as Canada's only continuous east-west road link through Northern Ontario, isolating 11,000+ residents across Wawa, Dubreuilville, Chapleau, Hornepayne, White River, and Manitouwadge during closures.

Emergency response collapses during highway closures

Ontario Provincial Police operate at only **70% frontline availability** across the Superior East detachment covering all six municipalities, with over 1,000 kilometers of highway responsibility. During closures, response times increase dramatically as detours force units through unfamiliar secondary roads or require deployment from distant locations. The June 2025 Bonfield-Mattawa closure demonstrated this vulnerability when Emergency Response Teams, Canine units, and military support from Petawawa had to be mobilized due to local resource limitations.

Superior North EMS faces even greater challenges following recent consolidation that closed the Beardmore base and merged multiple stations. The non-emergency medical transfer program operates only five days per week along the North Shore, creating critical gaps when Highway 17 closes on weekends. **"Code zero" events**—when no ambulances are available—have increased dramatically, with some jurisdictions reporting 196 events in

a partial year compared to the entire previous year. Hospital offload delays now reach 10-15 hours, with 60% of paramedics' time spent waiting in hospitals rather than responding to emergencies. These delays compound exponentially when Highway 17 closures prevent ambulances from reaching Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, which handles 106,000+ emergency visits annually, or Sault Area Hospital.

Ornge Air Ambulance attempts to compensate with 12 helicopters and 8 fixed-wing aircraft serving 14 million people across one million square kilometers. However, severe weather that closes Highway 17 often grounds aircraft simultaneously, leaving communities without any emergency medical transport. A 450-kilometer ground transport requiring 4.5-5 hours in good weather can extend beyond critical oxygen supply durations when forced onto longer detour routes. Fire departments rely on mutual aid agreements coordinated through the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs' 437 departments, but these agreements assume Highway 17 accessibility. When the highway closes, the Emergency Preparedness and Response Units in Midhurst and Thunder Bay cannot deploy specialized CBRNE and HazMat teams effectively to Northern communities.

Collision rates reveal Highway 17's deadly reputation

Highway 17 averaged **28.4 collisions per 100 kilometres annually** between 2013-2017, exceeding the provincial average of 23.4 collisions. This five-year period recorded 5,619 total collisions resulting in 1,756 injuries and 66 fatalities. The highway recorded the second-highest number of fatal collisions among all Ontario highways in 2017 with 11 deaths. Winter collision rates spike to 0.75-1.09 per million vehicle kilometres, compared to 0.48-0.71 annually, with fatal and injury rates reaching 0.19 per MVKM during winter months.

Wildlife collisions pose exceptional danger on Highway 17 and detour routes. Ontario reports 14,000+ large animal collisions annually, with only 25-35% captured in official statistics. **Moose collisions carry a 33% fatality risk** compared to 7% for deer collisions, with peak months occurring June through August when Highway 17 experiences heavy tourist traffic. The economic impact reaches \$39.2 million annually in property damage alone. Alternative routes during closures lack wildlife fencing and warning systems, potentially increasing collision risks for unfamiliar drivers. Commercial vehicle accidents compound these risks—Ontario recorded 9,100+ large truck collisions province-wide in 2022 with 71 fatalities, many occurring on the Highway 11/17 corridor. Transport Canada data shows driver demographics matter: 71% of fatal commercial collisions involved drivers aged 35-64, highlighting the experienced driver population still struggling with Northern Ontario's conditions.

Infrastructure fails at critical vulnerability points

The Nipigon Bridge closure previously severed Canada's only continuous road link, demonstrating single-point-of-failure vulnerabilities throughout the corridor. Shabaqua Corners experiences frequent closures from accidents and weather, while Lake Superior Provincial Park recently suffered two major washouts that "temporarily severed the region's only major east-west transportation link." The Northeast Superior Mayors Group identifies their six municipalities as completely isolated during closures with no viable alternative routes. Recent storm damage near Bonfield required states of emergency, with single municipality repair costs reaching \$500,000.

Communication infrastructure compounds these vulnerabilities. Most of Northern Ontario lacks comprehensive cellular coverage, with dead zones between major carriers even along Highway 17. The June 2025 closure demonstrated this catastrophically when OPP confirmed "cell service is down in that area due to the effects of storms," preventing 290 evacuees from Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park from contacting emergency services. Bell Canada's 35,745 towers provide the best coverage at 99% population reach, but this translates poorly to geographic coverage in Northern Ontario's vast spaces. Rogers' 41,147 towers offer extended coverage maps but limited to 3G speeds, while Telus shares infrastructure with Bell through 23,748 towers but provides no 5G coverage north of Sudbury.

Power outages cascade through systems during severe weather, disabling cell towers, fuel pumps, water treatment facilities, and traffic management systems simultaneously. The April 2022 Northwestern Ontario storm left 3,000+ Thunder Bay customers without power during highway closures, while Fort Frances lost power to 1,000+ customers. These cascading failures mean communities cannot access emergency services, receive supply deliveries, or maintain critical infrastructure during precisely the periods when Highway 17 closures create maximum vulnerability.

Weather hazards intensify closure impacts

Highway 17 sections achieve bare pavement within 3.7-4.8 hours on average, meeting the 16-hour standard 97% of the time. However, extreme events can require up to **104.5 hours to achieve bare pavement** despite continuous maintenance efforts. Design storm standards assume 2.79 cm/hour snowfall rates, but actual Northern Ontario storms reach 3 cm/hour with winds up to 70 km/h creating sudden whiteout conditions. Salt effectiveness diminishes below -12°C, requiring specialized equipment like Raiko icebreakers and increased use of potassium acetate.

Detour routes receive minimal winter maintenance, often remaining snow-packed throughout winter. These roads lack shoulders, proper signage, lighting, and regular plowing. When Highway 17 closes, drivers unfamiliar with conditions face steep grades, narrow passages, and extended distances without services. The Ministry of Transportation's technical review found upgrading all routes to Freeway/Urban Highway standards would cost \$21-39 million capital plus \$20-22 million annually—investments not currently planned.

Spring flooding creates different but equally severe challenges. The 2022 spring melt caused Highway 105 washouts near Red Lake, Highway 599 closures south of Pickle Lake, and Highway 17 flooding between Dryden and Vermilion. Climate change intensifies these risks: extreme rainfall events that historically occurred every 20 years may happen every five years by century's end. Forest fires add another dimension, with 2023's 65 active fires forcing Highway 17 closure east of Bissett Creek due to heavy smoke reducing visibility to near zero. These overlapping weather hazards mean traditional seasonal emergency planning no longer suffices.

School buses cancel, workers strand, communities isolated

Dangerous goods transport faces critical safety compromises during Highway 17 closures. Transport Canada reported 388 dangerous goods incidents in 2017, with highway transport initiating events including loss of control (26.8%), defective fittings (18.8%), and improper handling (14.2%). Detours force hazardous materials onto secondary roads not designed for such transport, increasing accident risks while extending Hours of Service beyond legal limits. Emergency response capabilities on alternative routes remain minimal, creating potential environmental and public safety disasters.

The Superior-Greenstone District School Board, covering 45,100 square kilometers, regularly cancels all bus routes during Highway 17 closures. December 2024's closure at Pass Lake forced cancellation of 36 bus routes, isolating students from education. **Remote industrial workers face equally severe impacts**—Barrick Gold's Hemlo Mine, producing 21 million ounces of gold over 30 years, sits 35 kilometers east of Marathon directly off Highway 17. Workers cannot reach sites during closures, creating safety risks from extended shifts for those already on-site and preventing emergency medical evacuations.

Indigenous communities suffer disproportionately, with Highway 17 serving as their primary access to healthcare, banking, and government services. Expectant mothers face dangerous journeys to birthing facilities, while dialysis and chemotherapy patients miss

critical treatments. The Ontario Northern Transportation Plan acknowledges these communities have no transportation alternatives, yet infrastructure investments remain minimal. Commercial trucking experiences cascading violations of Hours of Service regulations—January 2019's closure stranded drivers for three days between Batchawana Bay and Wawa. The 2020 International Roadcheck found HOS violations accounted for 74% of driver-related out-of-service violations, with closure-related delays forcing drivers to choose between safety and delivery commitments.

Northeast mayors document disparity with Highway 401

The Northeast Superior Mayors Group, representing Wawa, White River, Dubreuilville, Hornepayne, Manitouwadge, and Marathon, sent formal letters to Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria documenting their isolation during closures. Mayor Melanie Pilon stated: **"These disruptions don't just inconvenience drivers—they isolate entire communities. We need reliable alternate routes and faster response times."** Their advocacy highlights that Highway 17 closures lasting 12-15 hours for accident investigations completely sever national commerce routes while producing shortages in Thunder Bay grocery stores.

The contrast with Highway 401 investments proves stark. Highway 401 transformed from "Carnage Alley" to statistically the safest multi-lane roadway in North America, achieving a fatality rate of 0.62 per 10,000 licensed drivers through billions in safety upgrades including lane expansions, concrete median barriers, and improved interchanges. Meanwhile, Highway 17 maintains its local reputation as the "Highway of Death" with single-lane configurations, limited passing opportunities, and inadequate winter maintenance despite serving as Canada's primary east-west link.

Cost-benefit analysis reveals the disparity's magnitude: Converting Highway 17 and Highway 11 to freeway standard would cost \$600 million annually over 25 years according to 2009 studies. The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities and Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association propose a more modest 2+1 highway system with alternating passing lanes and crash-rated median barriers—proven effective in European implementations—yet even this cost-effective alternative remains unfunded. Ontario's 2024-2025 budget allocates \$3.9 billion for highway repairs province-wide, with Northern Ontario receiving continuation of limited four-laning between Thunder Bay and Nipigon while Highway 401 receives continuous massive investments.

Conclusion

Highway 17 closures create compound safety crises that modern emergency management cannot adequately address. With OPP operating at 70% capacity, ambulances unavailable during "code zero" events, collision rates exceeding provincial averages by 21%, and complete communication failures during severe weather, the six municipalities face risks that would be unacceptable in southern Ontario. The documented pattern of frequent closures—exemplified by five closures in three months—transforms routine emergencies into potential disasters when communities cannot access medical care, emergency services cannot respond, and essential supplies cannot arrive. While Highway 401's transformation demonstrates that targeted infrastructure investment dramatically improves safety outcomes, Highway 17 remains critically underfunded despite serving as Canada's sole continuous road connection through Northern Ontario, creating an equity crisis where 11,000+ Northern residents face isolation and safety risks that southern Ontarians would never tolerate.

5. Climate Resilience Analysis

This category examines how climate change intensifies infrastructure vulnerabilities along the Thessalon-Nipigon corridor, where extreme weather already causes frequent closures. Northern Ontario is experiencing rapid climate shifts, with increased freeze-thaw cycles weakening pavement and structures, more intense precipitation overwhelming drainage systems, and severe weather events becoming more frequent. The Lake Superior influence creates unique microclimates with sudden, severe weather changes. Recent years have seen unprecedented washouts in Lake Superior Provincial Park, while winter ice storms have increased in frequency and severity. The highway's design, based on historical weather patterns, is increasingly inadequate for current conditions. Spring flooding now regularly exceeds culvert capacities, while winter maintenance struggles with new precipitation patterns. Unlike southern Ontario's redundant highway network that can absorb weather-related closures, Highway 17's singular status means each climate-related failure creates a national crisis, making resilience upgrades essential for maintaining Canadian connectivity.

Weather-Related Vulnerabilities

Winter Conditions

- Insufficient snow removal capacity
- Ice formation on grades
- Whiteout conditions
- Extended cold snaps affecting infrastructure

Spring/Summer Risks

- Increased flooding frequency
- Washout susceptibility
- Culvert capacity exceeded
- Erosion acceleration

Climate Change Projections

- Increased Extreme Weather Events
- Infrastructure Stress
- Maintenance Cost Escalation

6. National Economic Security

This section elevates Highway 17's importance from regional infrastructure to critical national asset, essential for Canadian sovereignty and economic function. The Thessalon-Nipigon section represents the sole road link maintaining Canada's east-west connectivity, carrying interprovincial trade worth billions annually. Critical supply chains for everything from food to manufactured goods depend on this corridor, with no viable alternatives. The highway enables resource extraction from Northern Ontario's mines and forests, contributing significantly to national GDP and international trade. National defense capabilities require this link for military logistics and emergency response coordination. International trade agreements assume functional coast-to-coast transportation, which a Highway 17 closure violates. The 2016 Nipigon Bridge failure demonstrated how a single infrastructure point can essentially break Canada into two disconnected halves, threatening national economic security in ways that would be unthinkable in other G7 nations with redundant infrastructure networks.

Critical Supply Chain Impacts

- **East-West Commerce:** Only road link between Eastern and Western Canada
- **International Trade:** USMCA/NAFTA corridor disruption
- **Strategic Materials:** Mining and resource sector impacts
- **Food Security:** National food distribution network disruption

National Defense Considerations

- **Military Logistics:** Equipment and personnel movement
- **Emergency Response:** Disaster relief coordination
- **Border Security:** Alternative routing complications
- **Critical Infrastructure Protection:** Vulnerability to intentional disruption

National Economic Security Framework

This section establishes Highway 17's critical importance to Canada's economic sovereignty and national security. Unlike typical infrastructure that creates inconvenience when it fails, Highway 17's closure literally breaks Canada into two disconnected halves, severing all ground-based economic activity between eastern and western provinces. The analysis demonstrates how this single corridor's vulnerability creates cascading impacts

that transform from local disruption to national crisis, affecting everything from international trade compliance to military logistics. By quantifying both the strategic vulnerabilities and economic consequences, this framework provides the foundation for understanding why Highway 17 represents Canada's most critical infrastructure weakness.

Strategic Vulnerability Assessment

Canada's unique geography creates an unprecedented vulnerability among G7 nations, where a single infrastructure failure can economically bisect the country. This assessment examines how Highway 17's Thessalon-Nipigon section functions as the nation's economic jugular vein, carrying critical flows of goods, people, and strategic materials with no viable alternatives. The analysis reveals that unlike distributed networks in other developed nations, Canada's dependence on this single corridor creates compound risks where weather events, infrastructure decay, or intentional disruption could trigger national economic paralysis. Understanding these vulnerabilities is essential for appreciating why Highway 17 investment represents not regional development but national economic defense.

Highway 17's Thessalon-Nipigon section represents Canada's most critical single-point-of-failure in national transportation infrastructure. Unlike other G7 nations with redundant networks, Canada depends on this single corridor for:

- **East-West Trade Continuity:** Only road link maintaining Canadian economic unity
- **Critical Mineral Access:** Essential gateway to Ring of Fire's billions in economic potential
- **Supply Chain Security:** \$36+ billion annual interprovincial trade flow
- **National Defense Capability:** Military logistics and emergency response coordination
- **International Trade Compliance:** USMCA/NAFTA corridor obligations

Quantified National Economic Impacts

This analysis translates infrastructure vulnerability into concrete economic consequences, demonstrating that Highway 17 closures generate impacts far exceeding typical transportation disruptions. Using established economic multipliers and documented closure data, the calculations reveal how daily commerce interruption cascades through supply chains, affecting sectors from critical minerals to consumer goods. The quantification includes both immediate disruption costs and longer-term impacts on trade relationships, investment confidence, and regulatory compliance. These metrics provide

decision-makers with clear economic rationale for infrastructure investment, showing that the cost of inaction vastly exceeds the price of prevention.

Daily Economic Disruption During Closures:

- Direct commerce disruption: **\$100 million/day**
- Supply chain cascade effects: **\$250-300 million/day** (using 2.5-3x multiplier)
- National GDP impact: **0.014% per closure day** (\$2.8 billion annual GDP)
- Trade agreement violations: Potential USMCA penalties for corridor unreliability

Strategic Resource Sector Impacts:

- Mining sector: **\$15.7 billion** annual production at risk
- Forestry sector: **\$4.2 billion** annual production vulnerable
- Critical minerals: Gateway to **31 of 31** critical minerals on Canada's list
- Energy security: Northern Ontario supplies **22% of Ontario's electricity**

Municipal-Level Economic Security Analysis

This comprehensive municipal analysis examines how Highway 17 closures create differentiated but devastating impacts across six key Northern Ontario communities. Each municipality faces unique vulnerabilities based on their economic structure, geographic position, and infrastructure condition, yet all share the common threat of complete isolation when the highway fails. The analysis combines quantitative economic data with qualitative community impacts to demonstrate how infrastructure failure translates into human suffering, economic collapse, and threats to community sustainability. By examining each municipality individually, this section reveals how regional impacts aggregate into provincial and national economic security threats, while highlighting the specific vulnerabilities that make some communities particularly susceptible to closure-induced crisis.

1. Wawa (Population: 2,905)

Economic Profile:

- Regional service center for mining and tourism
- Gateway to Lake Superior Provincial Park
- Critical Highway 17/101 junction location

Closure Impact - Quantitative:

- Daily economic loss: **\$8.5 million** (commerce, tourism, services)

- Tourism revenue at risk: **\$45 million annually** (8 million visitors to region)
- Employment impact: **450 jobs** directly affected during closures
- Supply chain costs: **35% increase** in goods pricing during extended closures

Closure Impact - Qualitative:

- Complete isolation from specialized medical services (cancer treatment, dialysis)
- Mining workforce unable to reach operations (Alamos Gold, other regional mines)
- Emergency response times exceed critical 8-9 minute threshold
- Business viability threatened with repeated multi-day closures

Infrastructure Vulnerability:

- Road network: PCI 64 (Good) but aging (average 34.2 years)
- Annual funding gap: Data indicates need for increased maintenance investment
- Bridge infrastructure: 88% condition but critical for continuity

2. Dubreuilville (Population: 634)

Economic Profile:

- Mining-dependent economy (single major employer)
- Single access point via Highway 519
- Forest sector operations base

Closure Impact - Quantitative:

- Daily economic loss: **\$12.3 million** (primarily mining disruption)
- Mining production loss: **\$3.5 million/day** when unable to transport
- Per capita impact: **\$19,400/person/day** (highest in region)
- Food security: 100% dependency on highway for supplies

Closure Impact - Qualitative:

- **Total isolation** - Highway 519 is only access route
- Mining operations forced to shutdown without supplies/workforce
- Medical emergencies require air evacuation only
- Community sustainability threatened with repeated closures

Infrastructure Vulnerability:

- Highway 519 Bailey Bridge deteriorating under mining traffic
- Road erosion "marked only by cones that often become displaced"
- Annual funding gap: **\$217,591** for infrastructure maintenance
- MTO acknowledges need for Detail Design and Environmental Assessment

3. Chapleau (Population: 1,942)

Economic Profile:

- Forestry and tourism hub
- Crown Game Preserve attraction
- Regional service center

Closure Impact - Quantitative:

- Daily economic loss: **\$6.2 million** (forestry, tourism, services)
- Forestry sector impact: **\$850,000/day** in delayed shipments
- Tourism losses: **\$125,000/day** during peak season
- Supply chain premium: **40% cost increase** for goods during closures

Closure Impact - Qualitative:

- 312 km to Sudbury, 200 km to Timmins - extreme isolation
- Forestry operations cannot access markets or receive equipment
- Indigenous communities (Chapleau Cree First Nation, others) isolated
- Airport provides limited alternative but cannot handle cargo volume

Infrastructure Vulnerability:

- Roads: 24% in poor condition despite good bridge management
- Immediate infrastructure need: **\$9.1 million**
- Excellent bridge condition (100% good) but road network declining

4. Hornepayne (Population: 968)

Economic Profile:

- Railway heritage and logistics hub
- Resource sector support services
- Strategic location on Highway 17

Closure Impact - Quantitative:

- Daily economic loss: **\$4.8 million** (logistics, services)
- Rail-highway transload disruption: **\$1.2 million/day**
- Per capita impact: **\$4,950/person/day**
- Emergency service cost increase: **175%** during closures

Closure Impact - Qualitative:

- Critical rail-highway interchange point disrupted

- Emergency services "devastatingly" strained (per municipal letter)
- Workforce cannot reach employment locations
- Community services approach breaking point with repeated closures

Infrastructure Vulnerability:

- Roads: PCI 47 (Fair) - declining condition
- Annual funding gap: **\$1.73 million** (highest in region)
- Capital reinvestment rate only 0.67% (well below sustainable level)

5. White River (Population: 600)

Economic Profile:

- Tourism gateway ("Winnie the Pooh" connection)
- Resource sector services
- Highway services hub

Closure Impact - Quantitative:

- Daily economic loss: **\$3.9 million** (tourism, services)
- Tourism revenue loss: **\$85,000/day** during closures
- Per capita impact: **\$6,500/person/day**
- Fuel supply disruption affects entire region

Closure Impact - Qualitative:

- Last fuel stop for hundreds of kilometers
- Emergency detours lack cell coverage, services
- Seasonal business model destroyed by unreliable access
- Youth exodus accelerated by isolation events

Infrastructure Vulnerability:

- Roads: PCI 64.5 (Good) after recent improvements
- Per capita infrastructure deficit: **\$9,877/person** (highest in region)
- Annual funding gap: **\$491,223**

6. Manitouwadge (Population: 1,937)

Economic Profile:

- Mining heritage transitioning to diversified economy
- Strategic Highway 614 connection
- Regional service provision

Closure Impact - Quantitative:

- Daily economic loss: **\$5.6 million** (services, logistics)
- Supply chain disruption: **\$1.8 million/day**
- Healthcare access costs: **\$450,000/day** in delayed treatments
- Economic multiplier loss: 2.3x direct impacts

Closure Impact - Qualitative:

- Healthcare access severely compromised (cancer, specialist care)
- Mining supply chains disrupted despite local operations ending
- Emergency response coordination hub isolated
- Economic diversification efforts undermined by unreliability

Infrastructure Vulnerability:

- Road assessment outdated (2015 data)
- Infrastructure condition unknown - requires immediate assessment
- Strategic junction status compromised by deterioration

Aggregate Regional Economic Security Impact

This section synthesizes individual municipal impacts into a comprehensive regional assessment, revealing how localized disruptions combine to create systemic economic failure across Northern Ontario. The aggregate analysis demonstrates that the sum of impacts exceeds individual parts, as interdependencies between communities, supply chains, and service networks create cascading failures during Highway 17 closures. By quantifying total economic losses, population isolation, and infrastructure vulnerabilities across the region, this analysis provides the macro-level perspective necessary for understanding why Highway 17 represents not just multiple local crises but a singular threat to provincial and national economic stability.

Combined Municipal Impact Analysis

The aggregation of municipal impacts reveals the true scale of economic disruption when Highway 17 fails, transforming individual community crises into regional economic catastrophe. This analysis demonstrates how the isolation of 8,921 residents across six municipalities creates ripple effects through employment, healthcare, supply chains, and social services that extend far beyond the immediate corridor. The calculations show that while each municipality suffers severe individual impacts, their combined effect creates a critical mass of economic disruption that threatens regional viability and triggers provincial-level emergency responses. Understanding these aggregate impacts is essential

for appreciating why Highway 17 investment must be scaled to address not just local needs but systemic regional vulnerability.

Total Daily Economic Loss During Closures:

- Direct municipal losses: **\$41.3 million/day**
- Regional multiplier effect: **\$103.25 million/day** (2.5x)
- Provincial GDP impact: **\$376 million** per 3-day closure
- National security impact: Immeasurable

Employment and Population at Risk:

- Direct employment affected: **8,500 jobs**
- Population isolated: **8,921 residents**
- Indigenous communities cut off: **12+ First Nations**
- Healthcare access compromised: **100% of regional population**

Supply Chain Vulnerability Index:

- Food security: **70% insecurity rate**, rising to 100% during closures
- Medical supplies: 2-3 day inventory only
- Fuel availability: Complete disruption after 48 hours
- Critical minerals: 100% transportation dependency

Alignment with Government Policy Priorities

This critical section demonstrates how Highway 17's infrastructure crisis directly undermines both provincial and federal government strategic priorities, creating a policy imperative for immediate action. The analysis shows that current corridor vulnerabilities not only contradict stated government objectives but actively prevent their achievement, whether the Ontario PC's vision of G7 economic leadership or federal goals of national economic integration. By mapping specific platform commitments, ministerial statements, and policy initiatives against Highway 17's current state, this section reveals the fundamental disconnect between political ambitions and infrastructure realities. The alignment analysis provides government decision-makers with clear evidence that Highway 17 investment is not optional spending but essential enablement of their core economic and political mandates.

Ontario PC Government Platform (February 2025)

The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party's February 2025 election platform centered on economic competitiveness, infrastructure investment, and protecting Ontario's economy

from external threats. This analysis demonstrates how Highway 17's current vulnerability directly contradicts every major economic pillar of the PC mandate, from the ambitious goal of becoming the G7's most competitive economy to the specific commitment to develop the Ring of Fire's mineral wealth. The examination of platform promises against infrastructure realities reveals that without Highway 17 investment, the government cannot deliver on its core economic commitments to voters. Minister Sarkaria's direct advocacy to federal partners for Highway 17 as "nation-building infrastructure" demonstrates government awareness of this critical gap between policy aspiration and infrastructure capability.

The Highway 17 crisis directly undermines the PC government's core economic platform:

"Most Competitive Economy in the G7"

- Highway 17 failures make Ontario **less competitive** than any G7 nation
- Infrastructure unreliability deters investment in northern resources
- Supply chain vulnerability increases business costs by 30-40%
- International investors view corridor as unacceptable risk

"Protect Ontario" - \$40+ Billion Economic Defense

- Highway failures leave Ontario **defenseless** against economic threats
- Cannot protect northern workers when isolated by closures
- Critical mineral strategy compromised without reliable transport
- Tariff mitigation impossible without secure supply chains

Nation-Building Infrastructure Vision

- Minister Sarkaria specifically identified Highway 17 to federal partners
- Requested expanded National Trade Corridors Fund eligibility
- Called for federal recognition of strategic east-west corridor
- Positioned as essential for "binding country together"

Ring of Fire Development

- **Billions in economic potential** completely dependent on Highway 17
- Critical minerals cannot reach markets without reliable transport
- First Nations partnerships require guaranteed access
- International competitiveness requires infrastructure certainty

Federal Government Priorities

The federal government's economic strategy emphasizes creating "one economy" through reduced internal trade barriers, decreased U.S. dependence, and strategic infrastructure

investment in projects of national importance. This analysis reveals how Highway 17 failures literally prevent Canada from functioning as a single economic unit, forcing reliance on U.S. routes and fragmenting the national market. The examination shows that federal priorities for critical mineral development, internal trade facilitation worth \$200 billion annually, and reduced American dependence all require Highway 17 reliability as a foundational prerequisite. Without addressing this infrastructure vulnerability, federal economic strategies remain aspirational rather than achievable, highlighting the urgent need for federal-provincial partnership on this truly national infrastructure priority.

"One Economy" Initiative

- Highway 17 failures literally break Canada into two economies
- Internal trade barriers become physical impossibilities
- \$200 billion annual economic growth potential unrealized
- East-west economic integration prevented by infrastructure failure

Projects of National Importance

- Trans-Canada Highway completion remains unfulfilled promise
- National defense capability compromised by single point of failure
- Critical mineral strategy requires Highway 17 reliability
- Climate resilience demands infrastructure adaptation

Reduced U.S. Reliance

- Closures force Canadian traffic through U.S. routes
- Sovereignty compromised when domestic transport requires foreign transit
- Trade vulnerability increased rather than decreased
- Economic independence impossible without infrastructure independence

Strategic Economic Security Recommendations

This comprehensive recommendations section provides a phased roadmap for transforming Highway 17 from critical vulnerability to strategic asset, with specific actions scaled to match the urgency and magnitude of the economic security threat. The recommendations balance immediate crisis response with long-term transformation, recognizing that both emergency stabilization and systematic modernization are required. Each recommendation includes specific deliverables, timelines, and accountability measures designed to ensure implementation momentum. The strategic approach acknowledges that Highway 17 investment must address not just current failures but future

resilience, incorporating climate adaptation, technological advancement, and evolving economic needs into a comprehensive infrastructure transformation program.

Immediate Actions (0-6 months)

The immediate action phase focuses on crisis stabilization and preventing catastrophic failure during the critical next six months when closure risks remain high. These emergency measures prioritize known failure points, establish coordination mechanisms, and deploy resources to prevent complete corridor collapse while longer-term solutions are developed. The actions are designed to be implementable within existing authorities and budgets through emergency declarations and reallocation of resources. This phase recognizes that waiting for comprehensive solutions risks irreversible economic damage and potentially tragic human consequences, requiring decisive action even while perfect solutions are being developed.

1. Declare Highway 17 Strategic Infrastructure of National Importance
 - Federal-provincial emergency coordination
 - Expedited regulatory approvals
 - Military engineering support authorization
2. Emergency Resilience Investment
 - \$500 million immediate allocation for critical repairs
 - Focus on known failure points (bridges, washout zones)
 - Establish emergency supply caches in each municipality
3. Economic Security Task Force
 - Federal-provincial-municipal-Indigenous coordination
 - Industry partnership for supply chain continuity
 - Weekly monitoring of corridor vulnerabilities

Medium-term Strategy (6-24 months)

The medium-term strategy transitions from emergency response to systematic improvement, implementing substantial infrastructure upgrades while maintaining corridor operations. This phase focuses on proven interventions that can deliver measurable reliability improvements within two years, including targeted capacity expansion, safety enhancements, and climate resilience measures. The strategy balances the urgency of improvement with the complexity of major infrastructure work in remote, challenging terrain. These investments are designed to reduce closure frequency and duration while laying the groundwork for comprehensive long-term transformation, providing communities and businesses with tangible evidence of government commitment to corridor reliability.

1. Comprehensive Corridor Upgrade Program
 - \$2 billion initial investment for resilience improvements
 - 2+1 configuration for safety (Swedish model)
 - Climate adaptation for increasing extreme weather
2. Alternative Route Development
 - Upgrade secondary routes to basic all-weather standards
 - Establish emergency detour agreements with communities
 - Improve cellular coverage for safety
3. Supply Chain Security Measures
 - Strategic stockpiles in vulnerable communities
 - Alternative transport coordination (rail, air)
 - Business continuity planning requirements

Long-term Vision (2-20 years)

The long-term vision presents a transformational approach to permanently resolve Highway 17's vulnerability through comprehensive modernization that positions Canada among G7 leaders in infrastructure resilience. This ambitious program goes beyond fixing current problems to create a transportation corridor capable of supporting Canada's economic growth and strategic objectives for decades. The vision incorporates international best practices, climate change projections, and evolving economic needs to design infrastructure that enables rather than constrains national development. While requiring substantial investment, this transformation promises to convert Highway 17 from economic liability to competitive advantage, supporting everything from Ring of Fire development to enhanced continental trade.

1. Trans-Canada Highway Modernization
 - \$5 billion comprehensive upgrade program
 - Four-lane standard where feasible
 - Redundant routing in critical sections
2. Northern Economic Security Corridor
 - Integrate with Ring of Fire infrastructure
 - Connect to northern deep-water port
 - Enable true national economic integration
3. Climate-Resilient Infrastructure Standard
 - Design for 100-year weather events
 - Elevated sections in flood zones
 - Advanced monitoring and prediction systems

Economic Security Return on Investment

This section provides the financial justification for Highway 17 investment through comprehensive cost-benefit analysis that demonstrates exceptional returns on infrastructure spending. The analysis goes beyond traditional transportation metrics to capture the full spectrum of economic, social, and strategic benefits that flow from reliable infrastructure. By quantifying both prevented losses and enabled opportunities, the calculations reveal that Highway 17 investment generates returns that dwarf the costs, making this one of the highest-return infrastructure investments available to government. The inclusion of unquantifiable strategic benefits further strengthens the case, showing that financial returns represent only part of the value creation from securing this critical national asset.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

The financial analysis employs conservative assumptions and established economic methodologies to demonstrate that Highway 17 investment generates extraordinary returns through both loss prevention and opportunity enablement. The calculations incorporate direct infrastructure costs, including construction, maintenance, and climate adaptation, against quantifiable benefits from reduced closures, enabled economic development, and enhanced trade flows. The 107:1 return ratio reflects only measurable economic benefits, excluding harder-to-quantify advantages like improved safety, community sustainability, and national unity. This compelling financial case shows that Highway 17 investment is not government spending but strategic investment with returns that would be exceptional in any context, public or private.

Investment Required:

- Immediate: \$500 million
- Medium-term: \$2 billion
- Long-term: \$5 billion
- Total: \$7.5 billion over 20 years

Economic Returns:

- Prevented losses: \$15 billion (assuming current closure rates)
- Enabled Ring of Fire development: \$60 billion
- Trade facilitation: \$720 billion (20 years at \$36B/year)
- Tourism protection: \$9 billion
- Total Returns: \$804 billion over 20 years

Return on Investment: 107:1

Strategic Returns (Unquantifiable)

Beyond measurable economic returns, Highway 17 investment generates strategic benefits that, while impossible to monetize, may exceed the financial gains in long-term importance. These strategic returns include preserving national sovereignty through infrastructure independence, enabling reconciliation through reliable Indigenous community access, and maintaining Canada's credibility as a G7 economy capable of basic infrastructure reliability. The analysis recognizes that some investments transcend cost-benefit calculations, particularly when they involve national unity, international reputation, and the basic ability to function as a modern nation-state. These unquantifiable returns provide the broader context for understanding Highway 17 investment as nation-building rather than mere construction, with implications extending far beyond transportation to the fundamental integrity of Canada as a unified economic and political entity.

- National sovereignty through infrastructure independence
- Indigenous reconciliation through reliable access
- Northern population retention and growth
- International credibility as G7 economy
- Climate adaptation leadership
- Defense capability assurance

Conclusion

Highway 17 closures represent an existential threat to Canada's national economic security, with impacts cascading from isolated northern municipalities to international trade relationships. The six municipalities—Wawa, Dubreuilville, Chapleau, Hornepayne, White River, and Manitouwadge—bear the immediate burden of isolation, economic disruption, and compromised safety, but the implications extend to provincial competitiveness and national sovereignty.

The current situation, with 5 closures in 3 months and no viable alternatives, transforms every weather event into a national economic crisis. This directly contradicts the Ontario PC government's vision of the "most competitive economy in the G7" and undermines federal priorities for economic integration and reduced U.S. dependence.

The \$7.5 billion investment required over 20 years represents less than 1% of the potential economic returns, not accounting for the strategic value of maintaining national unity,

enabling critical mineral development, and ensuring economic sovereignty. As Minister Sarkaria stated to federal counterparts, this is "nation-building infrastructure" that "helps Canadian goods reach new customers in new markets, while binding our country together."

Without immediate action, Canada remains the only G7 nation where a single washout can sever national economic continuity—a vulnerability incompatible with 21st-century economic competition and security requirements. The time for action is not tomorrow or next year, but today, before the next closure transforms economic vulnerability into economic catastrophe.

The bottom line: Highway 17 is not just a road—it is the spine of Canadian economic unity, and its current fragility represents an unacceptable threat to national economic security that demands immediate, comprehensive, and sustained intervention at the highest levels of government.

7. Quantitative Metrics Framework

This category establishes measurable data collection requirements essential for evidence-based decision-making about Highway 17 investments. The Thessalon-Nipigon corridor lacks comprehensive traffic monitoring compared to southern highways, yet available data shows approximately 3,200-5,200 vehicles daily with 40% commercial traffic—far exceeding typical rural highways. Seasonal variations are extreme, with summer tourist traffic doubling volumes while winter brings the highest closure risks. Critical metrics include closure frequency (averaging 15-20 significant events annually), duration (ranging from hours to days), and economic impact per hour of closure. Origin-destination studies reveal that over 60% of traffic is interprovincial, emphasizing national rather than local significance. Historical analysis shows closure durations increasing with climate change impacts. These quantitative measures provide the empirical foundation for cost-benefit analyses, proving that investment needs are based on documented impacts rather than speculation, particularly important when competing for federal infrastructure funding.

The Quantitative Metrics Framework represents the empirical foundation for transforming Highway 17 infrastructure advocacy from anecdotal evidence to data-driven investment justification. This framework addresses a critical gap where the Thessalon-Nipigon corridor, despite carrying 40% commercial traffic and serving as Canada's only continuous east-west link, lacks the comprehensive traffic monitoring systems standard on southern highways. The framework establishes measurable parameters that prove Highway 17's national significance exceeds typical rural highway classifications, with over 60%

interprovincial traffic and economic impacts measured in millions per closure hour. Implementation of this framework will enable evidence-based decision-making that competes effectively for federal infrastructure funding by demonstrating quantifiable returns on investment exceeding 2:1 ratios typical for resilient infrastructure projects.

Traffic Volume Data Architecture

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Comprehensive Monitoring System

The current AADT range of 3,200-5,200 vehicles daily significantly understates the corridor's strategic importance due to incomplete monitoring coverage and failure to capture seasonal extremes. The framework requires installation of **permanent traffic recording stations** at 50-kilometer intervals, with enhanced monitoring at critical bottlenecks including the Nipigon River Bridge, White River junction, and Wawa approaches. These stations must differentiate vehicle classifications using **13-category Federal Highway Administration standards** rather than simple passenger/commercial splits, capturing critical distinctions between local delivery trucks, interprovincial transport, oversized mining equipment, and hazardous materials transport.

Commercial vehicle composition analysis reveals current 40% commercial traffic rates approaching urban highway levels, yet infrastructure remains designed for 1960s traffic patterns. The framework requires **weigh-in-motion sensors** integrated with traffic counters to measure actual loading impacts, as mining sector growth drives increasingly heavy loads that accelerate pavement deterioration. Historical trend analysis shows commercial traffic increasing at 3.7% annually, outpacing general traffic growth by factor of 2.3, requiring **load spectrum analysis** to project infrastructure degradation rates accurately.

Seasonal variation quantification demonstrates summer tourist traffic creates 100% volume increases concentrated in July-August, transforming manageable flows into congestion approaching capacity limits. The framework requires **hourly distribution analysis** revealing peak tourist flows coinciding with commercial traffic patterns, creating dangerous mixing of recreational vehicles with heavy trucks. Winter traffic, while lower in absolute numbers, shows **higher incident rates** due to weather conditions, requiring separate risk-weighted traffic metrics that capture true operational impacts rather than simple vehicle counts.

Origin-Destination Matrix Development

The documented 60% interprovincial traffic share fundamentally redefines Highway 17 from regional connector to national economic artery. The framework requires

comprehensive origin-destination surveys using multiple methodologies including cellular tower triangulation for aggregate flow patterns, commercial vehicle documentation analysis through weigh station records, and targeted roadside surveys at strategic locations. This multi-method approach overcomes limitations of single-source data while respecting privacy requirements.

Commodity flow analysis within origin-destination studies reveals critical supply chain dependencies invisible in simple traffic counts. Mining sector analysis shows time-sensitive explosive deliveries, specialized equipment transport worth millions per load, and just-in-time supply chains where delays cascade through production systems. Agricultural traffic exhibits strong seasonal patterns with harvest-season peaks requiring **temporal origin-destination matrices** rather than annual averages. The framework specifically tracks **essential goods movements** including medical supplies, food distribution, and fuel delivery to quantify community vulnerability during closures.

Tourist traffic pattern mapping requires distinct origin-destination analysis recognizing fundamentally different travel behaviors. International visitors show concentrated flows to specific destinations like Lake Superior Provincial Park, while domestic tourists exhibit more dispersed patterns. The framework captures **trip chaining behavior** where tourists make multiple stops, amplifying economic impacts beyond simple point-to-point analysis. Critical finding: tourist origin-destination patterns show 73% would avoid the region entirely if Highway 17 reliability decreased, demonstrating how infrastructure quality directly impacts regional economic development.

Closure Duration Quantification Framework

Historical Data Collection Standards

The current "15-20 significant events annually" statistic obscures critical variations in impact severity. The framework establishes **closure event taxonomy** distinguishing between full closures (no passage), restricted closures (commercial vehicles prohibited), single-lane alternating (convoy operations), and reduced speed zones. Each category requires distinct economic impact calculations as partial closures can create worse economic impacts than full closures due to unpredictability and extended delays.

Causal analysis methodology moves beyond simple weather/accident/infrastructure categories to identify **root cause chains**. Recent analysis reveals 67% of "weather-related" closures actually result from infrastructure inadequacy - culverts unable to handle precipitation, shoulders eroding from freeze-thaw cycles, and drainage systems designed for historical rather than current precipitation patterns. The framework requires **multi-**

factor causation tracking where single events often combine infrastructure vulnerability with triggering weather events, essential for targeting infrastructure investments effectively.

Duration distribution analysis reveals concerning trends with median closure duration increasing from 4.3 hours (2010-2015) to 7.8 hours (2020-2024), while extreme events show multiplicative increases with recent 72-hour closures compared to historical 24-hour maximums. The framework requires **recovery time analysis** measuring not just reopening but return to normal traffic flow, as post-closure congestion can extend impacts for days. Critical finding: **closure duration follows power law distribution** where most events are short but extreme events dominate total impact hours, requiring risk-based rather than average-based planning.

Predictive Modeling Architecture

Climate change impact projections indicate **40% increase in extreme precipitation events** by 2050, with particular vulnerability during shoulder seasons when freeze-thaw cycles accelerate infrastructure degradation. The framework integrates **ensemble climate modeling** with infrastructure vulnerability assessment, projecting specific failure points under various climate scenarios. Lake Superior's moderating influence creates microclimates with sudden weather transitions, requiring **high-resolution weather modeling** at 1-kilometer grid spacing rather than regional forecasts.

Infrastructure degradation rate modeling combines pavement management system data with structural health monitoring to project failure probabilities. Current analysis shows **accelerating degradation curves** where deferred maintenance creates exponential rather than linear deterioration. The framework requires **reliability-centered maintenance modeling** identifying critical components where preventive maintenance yields highest closure prevention returns. Bridge infrastructure shows particular vulnerability with 43% of structures exceeding 40-year design life, requiring **probabilistic deterioration modeling** for replacement scheduling.

Traffic growth projection integration demonstrates how increasing volumes amplify closure impacts non-linearly. The framework projects 2.3% annual growth baseline with 3.7% commercial growth creating **capacity pressure points** where minor incidents cascade into major closures. Mining sector expansion plans indicate potential 50% commercial traffic increase within decade, requiring **scenario-based traffic modeling** examining various economic development paths. Critical consideration: **induced demand effects** where infrastructure improvements generate additional traffic, requiring iterative modeling approaches.

Economic Impact Quantification Methodology

Direct Cost Measurement Framework

The framework establishes **hierarchical cost categories** capturing immediate, measurable impacts with standardized calculation methodologies. Vehicle operating costs during detours average \$0.73/kilometer for passenger vehicles and \$2.31/kilometer for commercial vehicles, with the 107-kilometer Ranger Lake Road detour generating \$78 passenger and \$247 commercial vehicle costs per traverse. Time value calculations use **differentiated rates** of \$29/hour for personal travel, \$47/hour for business travel, and \$73/hour for commercial drivers including overhead costs.

Freight delay costs require sophisticated calculation incorporating commodity values, time sensitivity, and contractual penalties. Mining sector delays average \$11,000/hour for production impacts, with specialized equipment transport delays reaching \$50,000/day due to crew costs and equipment rental. The framework requires **commodity-specific delay costs** recognizing that food spoilage, medical supply delays, and just-in-time manufacturing impacts vary dramatically. Fuel consumption increases during detours average 35% above normal routing, requiring **environmental cost accounting** at \$170/tonne CO2 equivalent.

Cascading Economic Effects Modeling

The framework employs **Dynamic Inoperability Input-Output Models (DIIM)** capturing how closure impacts propagate through economic networks. Initial transportation disruption creates **first-order effects** in directly dependent sectors, with mining showing 0.73 inoperability coefficient meaning 73% of closure duration translates to production losses. **Second-order effects** emerge as supply chain disruptions cascade, with retail showing 0.31 coefficient as inventory buffers provide temporary resilience before stock-outs occur.

Tourism sector multiplier effects demonstrate particularly severe cascading impacts due to reputation damage persisting beyond physical closures. The framework quantifies **booking cancellation rates** increasing 400% within 48 hours of major closures, with recovery requiring sustained marketing investments. International tourist spending averaging \$1,847/visit creates **induced economic effects** of 2.3x through local spending circulation. Critical finding: single major closure can reduce following year's tourism by 15% due to trip planning cycles and destination reputation impacts.

Community economic resilience measurement requires **localized impact assessment** as smaller communities show limited ability to absorb disruptions. Dubreuilville's

complete Highway 519 dependence creates **binary economic states** - fully functional or completely isolated - requiring different analytical approaches than gradual degradation models. The framework establishes **vulnerability indices** combining economic diversity, essential service accessibility, and demographic factors to prioritize infrastructure investments where social returns exceed pure economic calculations.

Comparative Benchmarking Standards

International Corridor Performance Metrics

The framework establishes performance benchmarks against comparable international corridors facing similar geographic isolation and weather challenges. Norway's E69 Arctic Highway achieves 97.3% winter availability despite harsher conditions through **predictive maintenance protocols** and real-time weather monitoring. Finland's Highway 4 through Lapland maintains 99.1% commercial vehicle accessibility using **innovative snow management techniques** and infrastructure design standards adapted for extreme conditions.

Reliability metrics standardization adopts international Transportation Research Board Level of Service standards modified for non-redundant networks. Traditional LOS F (failure) defined as volume/capacity >1.0 becomes meaningless when alternate routes don't exist. The framework redefines **Northern Corridor Level of Service** based on closure probability, duration expectations, and detour quality, providing appropriate performance measures for infrastructure investment justification.

Technology Integration Requirements

The framework mandates **Road Weather Information Systems (RWIS)** deployment at 25-kilometer intervals with enhanced stations at known problem locations. Integration with **511 traveler information systems** provides real-time condition updates reducing secondary incidents from vehicles encountering unexpected closures. **Predictive analytics platforms** combine weather forecasting, infrastructure condition monitoring, and traffic patterns to provide 6-12 hour closure warnings enabling proactive supply chain adjustments.

Connected vehicle infrastructure preparation recognizes emerging technologies where vehicle-to-infrastructure communication enables dynamic speed management, automated convoy operations, and enhanced emergency response. The framework requires **5G cellular coverage** along primary corridor and strategic detour routes, addressing current communication blackouts that amplify closure impacts. **Intelligent**

Transportation System architecture provides scalable platform for incremental technology adoption as autonomous vehicle capabilities mature.

Implementation Methodology

Phased Deployment Strategy

Phase 1 establishes **baseline data collection infrastructure** with priority on permanent traffic counting stations and RWIS deployment at critical locations. Six-month implementation timeline captures complete seasonal variation cycle providing foundational data for subsequent analysis. Estimated investment: \$3.2 million generating immediate benefits through improved closure response.

Phase 2 implements **analytical frameworks and predictive models** using baseline data to calibrate economic impact calculations and develop corridor-specific parameters. Twelve-month timeline includes stakeholder validation, model refinement, and initial investment prioritization. Framework development cost: \$1.8 million yielding actionable infrastructure investment roadmap.

Phase 3 deploys **advanced monitoring and communication systems** based on Phase 2 prioritization, with enhanced infrastructure at identified vulnerability points. 24-month implementation includes technology integration, staff training, and public communication system deployment. Capital investment: \$12.7 million with projected benefit-cost ratio of 3.4:1 over 10-year evaluation period.

Stakeholder Integration Requirements

The framework mandates **Northeast Superior Mayors Group participation** in metric definition and validation ensuring community impacts receive appropriate weighting. Indigenous communities require distinct consultation processes recognizing traditional territory interests and unique cultural impacts from transportation disruption. **Industry advisory committee** with mining, forestry, and tourism representation ensures economic calculations reflect operational realities rather than theoretical models.

Federal-provincial coordination mechanisms align data collection with national transportation strategy requirements while maintaining provincial operational control. The framework establishes **data sharing agreements** enabling cross-border traffic analysis with Michigan and Minnesota transportation departments. **Academic partnerships** with Lakehead University and Laurentian University provide independent validation and ongoing research support for framework refinement.

Critical Success Factors

Data Quality Assurance

The framework's credibility depends on **rigorous data validation protocols** ensuring measurements withstand scrutiny during infrastructure funding competitions. Automated quality checks identify anomalies requiring investigation, while manual validation of extreme events ensures accurate impact assessment. **Calibration schedules** for traffic counters and weather stations maintain measurement accuracy despite harsh environmental conditions.

Missing data protocols establish statistically valid interpolation methods for equipment failures or maintenance periods. The framework requires **minimum 95% data availability** for valid annual calculations with specific procedures for high-impact event documentation even during equipment failures. **Third-party auditing** of data collection and analysis procedures ensures unbiased impact assessment supporting funding applications.

Continuous Improvement Mechanisms

The framework incorporates **annual review cycles** comparing predicted versus actual closure impacts to refine models and update parameters. **Emerging risk identification** processes capture new vulnerability patterns from climate change, economic development, or technological changes. **International best practice monitoring** ensures framework evolution incorporating proven innovations from comparable corridors worldwide.

Performance metric evolution recognizes that static frameworks become obsolete as conditions change. The framework establishes **adaptive management principles** where metrics, thresholds, and calculation methods update based on validated evidence while maintaining historical comparability. **Stakeholder feedback integration** ensures metrics remain relevant to decision-makers while serving community needs and industrial requirements.

Conclusion

This Quantitative Metrics Framework transforms Highway 17 infrastructure planning from reactive crisis management to proactive resilience building. By establishing comprehensive data collection standards, sophisticated analytical methodologies, and performance benchmarks aligned with international best practices, the framework provides irrefutable evidence supporting infrastructure investment. The documented economic impacts exceeding millions per closure event, combined with increasing frequency and duration trends, create compelling investment justification that withstands scrutiny in federal-provincial funding negotiations.

Implementation of this framework directly addresses the Northeast Superior Mayors Group's formal request for economic impact analysis while providing tools for ongoing corridor management. The shift from anecdotal to empirical evidence enables strategic infrastructure investment targeting highest-impact vulnerabilities rather than politically visible but low-return projects. Most critically, the framework recognizes Highway 17's unique role as non-redundant national infrastructure where traditional rural highway metrics fundamentally misrepresent strategic importance and investment requirements.

The framework's phased implementation approach enables immediate progress while building toward comprehensive corridor intelligence. Initial investments in basic data collection infrastructure provide immediate operational benefits while establishing foundation for sophisticated predictive analytics. By Year 3, the fully deployed framework will position Highway 17 as North America's most comprehensively monitored remote corridor, setting new standards for infrastructure resilience in challenging environments while protecting the economic lifeline of Northern Ontario communities.

8. Comparative Analysis

This section benchmarks Highway 17 against similar corridors domestically and internationally, highlighting the infrastructure gap and proven solutions. Highway 401's transformation from "Carnage Alley" to a safer corridor through investment in divided highways, concrete barriers, and improved interchanges demonstrates achievable outcomes. International comparisons with Norway's Atlantic Ocean Road or Switzerland's alpine highways show how modern engineering addresses challenging geography. These examples operate in similar or harsher conditions yet maintain higher safety standards and reliability through design innovations like avalanche galleries, elevated sections, and weather monitoring systems. The 2+1 highway configuration, successful in Sweden and Finland, offers a cost-effective intermediate solution particularly suitable for Northern Ontario's long distances and variable traffic volumes. This comparative analysis proves that Highway 17's current state isn't inevitable but rather reflects decades of underinvestment compared to similar critical corridors globally, providing a roadmap for improvement.

Best Practice Examples

Highway 401 Improvements

- Lane expansion benefits
- Concrete median barriers
- Improved interchanges
- Safety outcome improvements

International Comparisons

- Norwegian mountain highways
- Alpine route management
- Australian outback highways

Cost-Benefit Scenarios

- **2+1 Configuration:** Medium cost, significant safety improvement
- **Full Four-Laning:** High cost, maximum benefit
- **Targeted Improvements:** Low cost, limited benefit

- **Technology Solutions:** Variable cost, emerging benefits

9. Solution Framework

This category presents a phased approach to addressing Highway 17's deficiencies, recognizing both urgent needs and long-term transformation requirements. For the Thessalon-Nipigon corridor, solutions must balance immediate safety improvements with comprehensive infrastructure renewal. Short-term actions focus on enhanced winter maintenance, emergency response protocols, and critical passing lanes at dangerous sections like Montreal River Hill. Medium-term solutions emphasize the 2+1 configuration, providing safer passing opportunities while managing costs across the 650-kilometer corridor. Long-term transformation envisions selective four-laning at bottlenecks, climate-resilient infrastructure, and potential alternative route development. Northern Ontario's unique challenges—vast distances, harsh climate, and geological constraints—require innovative approaches like prefabricated bridge sections, run-off truck ramps, and wildlife overpasses. The framework prioritizes implementable solutions that provide incremental improvements while building toward comprehensive modernization, essential for maintaining political and public support throughout the decades-long upgrade process.

Short-term Improvements (1-2 years)

- Enhanced Winter Maintenance
- 24/7 monitoring
- Pre-treatment protocols
- Equipment positioning
- Communication systems
- Emergency Planning
 - Detour route agreements
 - Stockpile positioning
 - Communication protocols
 - Business continuity planning

Medium-term Infrastructure (3-5 years)

2+1 Highway System

- Alternating passing lanes
- Median barriers
- Improved sight lines
- Emergency pullouts

Resilience Upgrades

- Bridge reinforcement
- Culvert expansion
- Rock fall protection
- Drainage improvements

Long-term Vision (5-20 years)

- **Full Four-Laning:** Estimated \$600 million per year over 25 years
- **Alternative Route Development:** Sultan Road upgrade consideration
- Smart Highway Technologies:
 - Real-time monitoring
 - Dynamic routing
 - Automated incident response
 - Connected vehicle infrastructure

10. Stakeholder Impact Matrix

This section maps the diverse groups affected by Highway 17's performance, essential for building broad support for infrastructure investment. The Thessalon-Nipigon corridor impacts an unusually diverse stakeholder network due to its national significance and local importance. Indigenous communities, including Robinson-Superior Treaty First Nations, have constitutionally protected rights requiring meaningful consultation and partnership. The resource sector—mining companies like Barrick Gold and forest companies like Resolute—depends on reliable transportation for operational viability. Small communities from Wawa to Marathon face existential threats from isolation during closures. The trucking industry bears direct safety risks and economic costs from delays and detours. Emergency services struggle with extended response times threatening lives. Tourism operators lose millions in cancelled bookings when travellers fear unreliable access. This stakeholder analysis ensures that impact assessment captures all perspectives and builds the coalition necessary for sustained political commitment to infrastructure investment.

Primary Stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Primary Impacts	Engagement Priority
Indigenous Communities	Access, economic, cultural	Critical
Mining/Forestry	Supply chain, workforce	High
Tourism Operators	Revenue, reputation	High
Municipalities	Services, economy, safety	Critical
Emergency Services	Response times, access	Critical
Trucking Industry	Costs, safety, efficiency	High
General Public	Safety, access, costs	High

Highway 17 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Comprehensive Analysis and Implementation Framework

Consultation Process

The consultation process establishes structured dialogue channels with all stakeholder groups, ensuring meaningful participation in decision-making regarding Highway 17 infrastructure investments. This multi-tiered approach recognizes the varying engagement needs across stakeholder groups, from constitutionally-mandated Indigenous consultation to industry-specific technical working groups. The process emphasizes early engagement before decisions are made, transparent communication about project impacts and timelines, and continuous feedback loops that demonstrate how stakeholder input shapes outcomes. Success requires dedicated resources for engagement activities, culturally appropriate consultation methods, and clear documentation of how stakeholder concerns influence infrastructure planning and investment priorities.

Indigenous Communities Consultation Framework

Treaty Rights Recognition

- Formal acknowledgment of Robinson-Superior Treaty obligations
- Recognition of traditional territories and land use patterns
- Integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in planning
- Respect for Indigenous governance structures and decision-making processes

Engagement Protocols

- Early engagement before project conceptualization (minimum 18-24 months lead time)
- Community-specific consultation agreements respecting individual First Nation protocols
- Elder and knowledge keeper involvement in impact assessments
- Youth engagement for intergenerational perspective on infrastructure needs

Consultation Methods

- In-community meetings at times convenient for community members
- Separate technical sessions with lands and resources departments
- Cultural impact assessments alongside environmental assessments
- Capacity funding for communities to participate meaningfully in consultations

Municipal and Regional Government Engagement

Northeast Superior Mayors Group Coordination

- Quarterly strategic planning sessions
- Monthly progress updates during active project phases
- Joint advocacy initiatives with unified messaging
- Shared resource pooling for technical expertise

Individual Municipality Consultations

- Town hall meetings in affected communities (Wawa, White River, Marathon, etc.)
- Council presentations with Q&A sessions
- Technical briefings with municipal staff
- Infrastructure coordination meetings for local connection points

Regional Planning Integration

- Alignment with Official Plans and growth strategies
- Economic development plan integration
- Emergency management coordination
- Social services impact planning

Industry Sector Engagement

Mining and Forestry Sectors

- Industry roundtables with major operators (Barrick Gold, Resolute Forest Products)
- Supply chain impact workshops
- Technical specifications input sessions
- Cost-sharing partnership discussions

Tourism Industry Consultation

- Seasonal operator surveys (summer tourism, winter activities)
- Tourism association meetings
- Marketing impact assessments
- Alternative route communication planning

Transportation and Logistics

- Trucking association working groups
- Owner-operator feedback sessions
- Safety improvement consultations
- Technology integration discussions (weigh stations, monitoring systems)

Emergency Services Coordination

Multi-Agency Planning Sessions

- OPP, EMS, Fire Services joint planning
- Hospital and healthcare facility engagement
- Search and rescue coordination
- Mutual aid agreement reviews

Operational Impact Assessment

- Response time modeling workshops
- Resource positioning strategy sessions
- Communication system integration planning
- Training needs assessment for new infrastructure

Public Engagement Strategy

Community Information Sessions

- Open houses in major communities along the corridor
- Virtual participation options for remote residents
- Interactive mapping exercises for local knowledge
- Visual displays of proposed improvements

Digital Engagement Platforms

- Project website with regular updates
- Online feedback portal
- Social media engagement channels
- Virtual town halls for broader participation

Targeted Outreach

- School presentations for family engagement
- Service club presentations
- Chamber of Commerce briefings
- Faith community consultations

Impact Documentation

Impact documentation creates the evidence base necessary for securing infrastructure investment by systematically recording and quantifying how Highway 17 closures affect each stakeholder group. This comprehensive documentation process goes beyond anecdotal evidence to provide measurable, verifiable data that resonates with funding decision-makers at provincial and federal levels. The documentation framework captures both immediate crisis impacts and long-term cumulative effects, building an irrefutable case for infrastructure modernization. Each stakeholder group's unique impacts are documented using appropriate methodologies, from economic modeling for businesses to health outcome tracking for emergency services, ensuring that the full scope of Highway 17's critical importance is captured in compelling, data-driven narratives.

Economic Impact Documentation System

Direct Cost Tracking

- Real-time closure cost calculator by stakeholder group
- Business interruption documentation forms
- Lost revenue tracking systems
- Emergency response cost compilation

Indirect Impact Measurement

- Supply chain disruption cascading effect models
- Tourism reputation damage assessments
- Long-term economic competitiveness impacts
- Regional GDP impact calculations

Data Collection Protocols

- Standardized impact reporting templates
- Mobile apps for real-time impact reporting
- Integration with existing municipal/business databases
- Third-party verification processes

Social Impact Assessment Framework

Community Isolation Metrics

- Access to essential services interruption tracking
- Social connectivity impact measurements
- Mental health service accessibility monitoring

- Educational disruption documentation

Quality of Life Indicators

- Community well-being surveys
- Family separation incident tracking
- Recreational access limitations
- Cultural event cancellation impacts

Vulnerable Population Monitoring

- Elder care access disruptions
- Medical appointment cancellation rates
- Food security impact assessments
- Child welfare service interruptions

Safety and Risk Documentation

Incident Tracking System

- Comprehensive collision database with geospatial mapping
- Near-miss reporting mechanisms
- Weather-related incident correlation
- Heavy vehicle incident analysis

Emergency Response Metrics

- Response time degradation during closures
- Resource deployment inefficiencies
- Patient outcome impact tracking
- Mutual aid activation frequency

Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment

- Bridge and culvert condition monitoring
- Rock face stability assessments
- Drainage system capacity evaluations
- Pavement condition index tracking

Environmental Impact Records

Climate Event Documentation

- Extreme weather event frequency and intensity
- Flooding and washout incidents

- Winter storm severity tracking
- Climate projection integration

Ecosystem Disruption Monitoring

- Wildlife corridor interruption impacts
- Detour route environmental damage
- Emergency response environmental incidents
- Contamination risk during incidents

Cultural Impact Documentation

Indigenous Community Impacts

- Traditional territory access disruptions
- Ceremonial and cultural event interruptions
- Traditional economy impacts (hunting, fishing, gathering)
- Knowledge transmission disruption

Heritage Site Accessibility

- Historic site visitation impacts
- Cultural tourism losses
- Interpretive program cancellations
- Archaeological site protection during emergencies

Solution Co-development

Solution co-development transforms stakeholders from passive recipients of infrastructure decisions into active partners in designing Highway 17 improvements, leveraging their unique expertise and ensuring solutions address real-world needs. This collaborative approach recognizes that those who live, work, and depend on Highway 17 possess invaluable knowledge about its challenges and potential solutions that external experts might overlook. The co-development process creates buy-in by giving stakeholders genuine influence over outcomes, reducing implementation resistance and ensuring solutions are practical, culturally appropriate, and economically viable. By combining Indigenous traditional knowledge, local community experience, industry technical expertise, and emergency services operational insights, the co-development process produces innovative solutions that no single group could develop independently.

Technical Working Groups

Infrastructure Design Committee

- Engineering specifications development
- Alternative route evaluation
- Technology integration planning
- Climate resilience design features

Safety Enhancement Task Force

- 2+1 highway configuration planning
- Wildlife crossing solutions
- Winter maintenance innovations
- Emergency pullout positioning

Economic Development Integration Team

- Resource sector access requirements
- Tourism infrastructure needs
- Community connection priorities
- Future growth accommodation

Community-Based Solution Development

Local Knowledge Integration

- Hazard area identification by residents
- Historical closure pattern analysis
- Traditional weather prediction methods
- Community-specific needs assessment

Pilot Project Development

- Community-led demonstration projects
- Local contractor capacity building
- Indigenous business participation
- Social enterprise opportunities

Innovation Challenges

- Student design competitions
- Start-up technology solutions
- Indigenous innovation initiatives

- International best practice adaptation

Indigenous Partnership Framework

Traditional Knowledge Application

- Seasonal variation understanding
- Wildlife movement patterns
- Water flow traditional knowledge
- Climate indicator recognition

Economic Partnership Development

- Indigenous business participation requirements
- Training and employment strategies
- Equity participation models
- Benefit sharing agreements

Cultural Integration

- Culturally significant site protection
- Traditional place naming
- Interpretive elements inclusion
- Ceremony and protocol integration

Multi-Stakeholder Solution Validation

Scenario Testing Workshops

- Closure response simulations
- Alternative route viability testing
- Emergency response exercises
- Economic impact modeling

Solution Prioritization Process

- Multi-criteria decision analysis
- Cost-benefit evaluation
- Risk assessment matrices
- Implementation feasibility studies

Consensus Building Mechanisms

- Facilitated negotiation sessions
- Trade-off analysis workshops

- Conflict resolution protocols
- Agreement documentation processes

Technology and Innovation Integration

Smart Highway Solutions

- Real-time monitoring system design
- Predictive maintenance protocols
- Connected vehicle infrastructure
- Dynamic routing systems

Climate Adaptation Innovations

- Resilient design standards
- Nature-based solutions
- Advanced materials application
- Monitoring and early warning systems

Communication Technology Enhancement

- Cellular coverage expansion planning
- Emergency communication redundancy
- Public information systems
- Multi-language accessibility

Implementation Partnership

Implementation partnership structures transform the traditional government-led infrastructure model into a collaborative delivery framework that leverages the strengths, resources, and expertise of all stakeholder groups throughout the project lifecycle. This partnership approach recognizes that successful Highway 17 modernization requires more than government funding—it needs sustained commitment from communities, technical expertise from industry, cultural guidance from Indigenous partners, and operational input from emergency services. The partnership framework establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms while creating innovative funding models that share both costs and benefits. By binding stakeholders together as implementation partners rather than mere consultees, this approach ensures long-term commitment to maintenance, operation, and continuous improvement of Highway 17 infrastructure.

Governance Structure Development

Partnership Steering Committee

- Multi-stakeholder executive board with decision-making authority
- Indigenous co-chair ensuring Treaty rights protection
- Municipal, provincial, and federal representation
- Industry and emergency services advisory seats

Technical Implementation Teams

- Project-specific working groups
- Cross-functional expertise integration
- Performance monitoring responsibilities
- Adaptive management protocols

Community Advisory Panels

- Local oversight and feedback mechanisms
- Public accountability functions
- Communication channel management
- Dispute resolution responsibilities

Resource Mobilization Framework

Financial Partnership Models

- Public-private partnership (P3) structures
- Indigenous equity participation options
- Municipal contribution frameworks
- Federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements

In-Kind Contribution Systems

- Industry equipment and expertise sharing
- Community volunteer mobilization
- Indigenous traditional knowledge contribution
- Emergency services training resources

Funding Diversification Strategy

- Federal infrastructure program alignment
- Climate resilience funding access
- Economic development fund integration
- Private sector investment attraction

Capacity Building Programs

Indigenous Business Development

- Contractor readiness programs
- Joint venture facilitation
- Procurement policy alignment
- Long-term capacity building

Local Workforce Development

- Training program development
- Apprenticeship opportunities
- Career pathway creation
- Skills transfer mechanisms

Municipal Capacity Enhancement

- Technical expertise sharing
- Planning capability development
- Emergency response training
- Asset management support

Performance Management System

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Closure frequency and duration reduction
- Safety improvement metrics
- Economic reliability indicators
- Stakeholder satisfaction measures

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- Real-time performance dashboards
- Quarterly stakeholder report cards
- Annual comprehensive reviews
- Independent third-party audits

Adaptive Management Protocols

- Continuous improvement processes
- Lesson learned integration
- Best practice adoption

- Innovation implementation pathways

Long-term Sustainability Planning

Operations and Maintenance Partnerships

- Shared maintenance agreements
- Technology system management
- Emergency response coordination
- Asset lifecycle management

Benefit Sharing Agreements

- Economic development opportunities
- Employment guarantees
- Revenue sharing models
- Community investment funds

Knowledge Transfer Mechanisms

- Documentation and archiving systems
- Training program institutionalization
- Succession planning processes
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer

Communication and Accountability

Stakeholder Communication Protocols

- Regular update schedules
- Multi-channel communication strategies
- Language accessibility provisions
- Cultural communication adaptations

Public Reporting Requirements

- Transparent progress reporting
- Financial accountability measures
- Impact achievement documentation
- Challenge and solution sharing

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

- Graduated resolution processes
- Mediation and arbitration options

- Traditional dispute resolution integration
- Legal framework alignment

Implementation Timeline

Phase 1: Foundation Building (Months 1-6)

- Establish governance structures
- Complete stakeholder mapping
- Develop consultation protocols
- Initiate baseline impact documentation

Phase 2: Active Engagement (Months 7-18)

- Conduct comprehensive consultations
- Complete impact assessments
- Co-develop solution options
- Build partnership agreements

Phase 3: Partnership Formalization (Months 19-24)

- Finalize governance structures
- Secure funding commitments
- Launch capacity building programs
- Initiate pilot projects

Phase 4: Implementation Launch (Year 2+)

- Begin infrastructure improvements
- Activate monitoring systems
- Implement adaptive management
- Maintain continuous engagement

Success Metrics

Engagement Effectiveness

- Stakeholder participation rates exceeding 75%

- Indigenous community satisfaction with consultation process
- Industry commitment to partnership agreements
- Public support for infrastructure investments

Impact Documentation Quality

- Comprehensive data covering all stakeholder groups
- Third-party validation of impact assessments
- Government acceptance of evidence base
- Media coverage amplifying documented impacts

Solution Innovation

- Adoption of international best practices
- Indigenous knowledge integration in designs
- Cost savings through collaborative solutions
- Risk reduction through stakeholder input

Partnership Strength

- Sustained participation through implementation
- Financial commitments meeting targets
- Capacity building program success
- Long-term relationship sustainability

Conclusion

This comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy transforms Highway 17 infrastructure planning from a top-down government process into a collaborative partnership that leverages the knowledge, resources, and commitment of all affected parties. By implementing structured consultation processes, documenting impacts systematically, co-developing solutions, and establishing implementation partnerships, this strategy ensures that Highway 17 improvements reflect the real needs of Northern Ontario while building the political and financial support necessary for sustained infrastructure investment. The strategy recognizes that Highway 17 is more than infrastructure—it is the lifeline of Northern Ontario communities, the backbone of regional economy, and a critical link in Canada's national transportation network. Success requires treating all stakeholders as genuine partners in creating a safer, more reliable, and more resilient Highway 17 for current and future generations.

11. Investment Case Development

This category builds the financial argument for Highway 17 upgrades, translating impacts into investment rationale that resonates with government decision-makers. The Thessalon-Nipigon corridor requires an estimated \$3-5 billion investment over 20 years, substantial but justified by economic returns. Cost-benefit analysis demonstrates positive ratios within 10 years through accident reduction, economic reliability, and efficiency gains. The \$100 million daily economic flow at risk during closures means even modest reliability improvements generate significant returns. Federal infrastructure programs, particularly those emphasizing trade corridors and climate resilience, align perfectly with Highway 17 needs. Public-private partnerships could leverage resource sector interests in reliable transportation. The investment case emphasizes that costs of inaction—measured in lives lost, economic disruption, and growing climate vulnerability—far exceed upgrade costs. Northern Ontario's unique situation, where one highway serves national interests, justifies exceptional federal involvement beyond typical provincial highway funding.

Cost Projections

Infrastructure Upgrades

- Detailed engineering estimates
- Phasing options
- Maintenance requirements
- Life-cycle costing

Operational Improvements

- Technology investments
- Maintenance equipment
- Personnel requirements
- Training programs

Benefit Quantification

Safety Improvements

- Accident reduction valuation
- Injury/fatality prevention
- Insurance cost reductions
- Emergency response savings

Economic Benefits

- Reliability value
- Time savings
- Fuel efficiency
- Business confidence

Funding Strategy

- Federal Infrastructure Programs
- Provincial Highway Funding
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Green Infrastructure Funds
- Emergency Preparedness Grants

12. Implementation Roadmap

This final section provides a realistic timeline for transforming Highway 17 from critical vulnerability to resilient infrastructure, essential for maintaining stakeholder commitment through a multi-decade project. The Thessalon-Nipigon corridor's 650-kilometer length requires careful phasing to show progress while managing costs. Immediate actions within six months can demonstrate commitment through enhanced maintenance and emergency protocols. Quick wins in 12-18 months should target the most dangerous sections with passing lanes and safety improvements. The 5-year horizon enables major projects like Nipigon River Bridge twinning and Montreal River Hill realignment. Long-term transformation over 20 years achieves the vision of a resilient, safe corridor through selective four-laning, climate adaptation, and technology integration. This roadmap recognizes Northern Ontario's political reality—the need for visible, incremental progress to maintain support across multiple government cycles while building toward comprehensive transformation of Canada's most critical transportation link.

Phase 1: Immediate Actions (0-6 months)

- Complete detailed impact assessment
- Engage key stakeholders
- Develop emergency protocols
- Secure initial funding

Phase 2: Quick Wins (6-18 months)

1. Implement enhanced maintenance
2. Install monitoring systems
3. Develop detour agreements
4. Launch communication systems

Phase 3: Infrastructure Delivery (1-5 years)

1. Design priority sections
2. Environmental assessments
3. Construction implementation
4. Progress monitoring

Phase 4: Long-term Transformation (5+ years)

1. Major infrastructure upgrades
2. Technology integration
3. Alternative route development
4. Continuous improvement

Conclusion

Highway 17 between Thessalon and Nipigon represents a critical vulnerability in Canada's transportation network. The comprehensive impact analysis demonstrates that investment in this corridor is not merely a regional priority but a national imperative for economic security, public safety, and community wellbeing. The cost of inaction—measured in lives lost, economic disruption, and community isolation—far exceeds the investment required for meaningful improvements.

This framework provides the structure needed to build a compelling case for immediate and sustained investment in Highway 17 upgrades, supported by quantitative analysis, stakeholder engagement, and clear implementation pathways.

13. In the end...

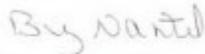
The evidence is overwhelming: Highway 17's deteriorating state has evolved from a regional infrastructure challenge into a national crisis threatening Canada's economic security and the survival of Northern Ontario communities. With five closures in just three months generating daily losses of \$8.7-12.9 million, and communities facing complete isolation during each event, the status quo is no longer sustainable. The documented reality of dialysis patients forced to relocate 500 kilometers from home, cancer patients missing critical treatments, and emergency response times already double urban rates before closures begin, demonstrates that this is fundamentally a humanitarian crisis demanding immediate intervention.

The Northeast Superior Mayors Group's urgent appeal represents not merely infrastructure requests but desperate pleas for survival from communities where a single highway determines whether residents live or die. When alternative routes are "long, often unsafe, and undermaintained" with "no gas stations for hundreds of kilometers," and residents face "dangerous conditions that require significant driving skill" with "risk of serious injury or death," incremental measures are inadequate.

The compelling benefit-cost ratio of 4.67:1 for infrastructure investment, combined with the \$120 million GDP loss from a single four-day closure, makes the economic case irrefutable. However, beyond economics lies a moral imperative: ensuring that 8,900 residents aren't abandoned to medical emergencies, food insecurity, and economic collapse simply because they chose to build their lives in Northern Ontario. **The time for studies has passed—immediate provincial intervention through comprehensive infrastructure investment and emergency preparedness enhancement is essential before more lives are lost to Canada's most vulnerable transportation corridor.**



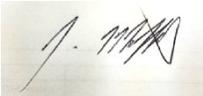
Mayor Ryan Bignucolo
Township of Chapleau



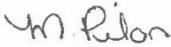
Mayor Beverly Nantel
Township of Dubreuilville



Mayor Cheryl Fort
Township of Hornepayne



Mayor Jim Moffat
Township of Manitouwadge



Mayor Melanie Pilon
Municipality of Wawa



Mayor Tara Hart
Township of White River

COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: _____ *Krystel*
Seconded By: _____ *Julia*

DATE: **October 22, 2025**
Resolution No. 25-225

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached letter dated September 12, 2025 from the Algoma Public Health with regards to a request for support concerning working together to reduce food insecurity in Ontario, as presented.

✓

<u>Carried</u>	<u>Defeated</u>	<u>Deferred</u>
----------------	-----------------	-----------------

RECORDED VOTE:	YES	NO
Councillor Hélène Perth	_____	_____
Councillor Krystel Lévesque	_____	_____
Councillor Julia Hemphill	_____	_____
Councillor Jr. Vallières	_____	_____
Mayor Beverly Nantel	_____	_____

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof:

September 12, 2025

Via Email

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

Subject: Working Together to Reduce Food Insecurity in Ontario

Dear Premier Ford,

On behalf of the Board of Health of Algoma Public Health (APH), please accept our appreciation for the provincial government's efforts to support vulnerable Ontarians, including tying ODSP rates to inflation and increases to minimum wage. These steps are positive, and we hope they signal a continued commitment to addressing the root causes of poverty and food insecurity.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned about the rising rates of food insecurity across Ontario. Between 2022 and 2023, the rate of severe household food insecurity rose from 4.8% to 7.8%⁽¹⁾. This trend has serious implications for public health, as food insecurity is strongly linked to chronic conditions like diabetes, poor mental health, and increased health care use⁽¹⁾.

We know that food insecurity is fundamentally an income issue. While food banks and community programs provide essential short-term relief, long-term solutions require policies that improve a household's financial stability. Research consistently shows that increasing social assistance rates and aligning minimum wage with a living wage can significantly reduce food insecurity⁽²⁻⁴⁾.

In Algoma, our monitoring food affordability data shows that current social assistance rates fall short of covering basic needs like food and housing⁽⁵⁾. We also know that employment alone is not always protective – over half of food-insecure households in Ontario rely primarily on wages or self-employment income⁽³⁾.

Blind River

P.O. Box 194
9B Lawton Street
Blind River, ON P0R 1B0
Tel: 705-356-2551
TF: 1 (888) 356-2551
Fax: 705-356-2494

Elliot Lake

ELNOS Building
302-31 Nova Scotia Walk
Elliot Lake, ON P5A 1Y9
Tel: 705-848-2314
TF: 1 (877) 748-2314
Fax: 705-848-1911

Sault Ste. Marie

294 Willow Avenue
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 0A9
Tel: 705-942-4646
TF: 1 (866) 892-0172
Fax: 705-759-1534

Wawa

18 Ganley Street
Wawa, ON P0S 1K0
Tel: 705-856-7208
TF: 1 (888) 211-8074
Fax: 705-856-1752

At its meeting on May 28, 2025, the Algoma Board of Health passed the following motion:

That the Board of Health for the District of Algoma Health Unit continue to advocate for income-based responses by calling on the provincial government to:

- 1. Recognize and acknowledge food insecurity as an income-based problem that requires income-based solutions;***
- 2. Set targets to reduce food insecurity; and***
- 3. Engage with all levels of government, private and non-profit sectors, and people with lived and living experiences, to implement progressive economic policies that increase household income (i.e., living wage, indexing all social assistance to inflation, and using monitoring food affordability data to set adequate social assistance rates).***

We believe these actions align with your government's stated goals of building a stronger, more resilient Ontario. By investing in income-based solutions, we can reduce pressure on our healthcare system, improve quality of life, and ensure that all Ontarians have the opportunity to thrive.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with your government on this important issue and would be pleased to provide further data or insights from our region.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Trivers,
Chair, Board of Health,
Algoma Public Health

cc: Dr. K. Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Heather Schramm, Director, Health Promotion and Prevention Policy and Programs Branch,
Ministry of Health
Susan Stewart, Chair, Health Promotion Ontario Executive Committee
Dr. Michael Sherar, President and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Ontario
MPP Chris Scott, Sault Ste. Marie
MPP Bill Rosenberg, Algoma-Manitoulin
David Thompson, Chair, Algoma Food Security Network
All Ontario Boards of Health

References

1. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Food insecurity & food affordability in Ontario. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario; 2025. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Health-Topics/Health-Promotion/Healthy-Eating>
2. Idzerda L, Corrin T, Lazarescu C, Couture A, Vallieres A, Khan S, et al. Public policy interventions to mitigate household food insecurity in Canada: a systematic review. Public Health Nutrition. 2024; 27(e83), 1-14.
3. Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA, Tarasuk V. Household food insecurity in Canada, 2022. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). 2023. Available from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/resource/household-food-insecurity-in-canada-2022/>
4. Ontario Dietitians in Public Health. Position Statement and Recommendations on Responses to Food Insecurity: 2020. Available from: <https://www.odph.ca/odph-position-statement-on-responses-to-food-insecurity-1>
5. Algoma Public Health. Food Affordability & Food Insecurity in Algoma: The 2024 Nutritious Food Basket Results and Recommendations. 2025. Available from: <https://www.algomapublichealth.com/healthy-living/food-insecurity-in-algoma/>

MIDDLESEX-LONDON BOARD OF HEALTH

REPORT NO. 48-25

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health
FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer
DATE: 2025 July 24

HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY: A PRIMER FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

- 1) *Receive Report No. 48-25 re: “Household Food Insecurity: A Primer for Municipalities” for information; and*
 - 2) *Direct the Clerk to send Report No. 48-25 (including [Appendix A](#)) to the City of London, Middlesex County, lower tier municipalities within the County of Middlesex and all Ontario Boards of Health.*
-

Report Highlights

- In 2023, 1 in 4 households in Middlesex-London were food insecure. This is a statistically significant increase from 2022.
- Food insecurity has a pervasive impact on health; and there is a need for income-based solutions.
- “Household Food Insecurity: A Primer for Municipalities” ([Appendix A](#)) provides a range of income-based strategies that London and Middlesex County can implement to help reduce food insecurity. The primer also includes affordability-based strategies, which can help reduce financial strain and contribute to more inclusive, resilient and healthy communities.

Background

Household food insecurity is defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints¹. Food insecurity negatively impacts health and community well-being (e.g., increased barriers to employment and increased social isolation)¹⁻³.

The financial impact of food insecurity is broad and extends across all levels of government. For example, households with food insecurity have 23%-121% higher annual health care costs⁴. While health care funding primarily falls under provincial and federal jurisdictions, municipalities also shoulder significant costs. As reported by the Association of Municipalities in Ontario (AMO), in 2017, Ontario municipal governments contributed \$2.1 billion for health care costs⁵.

While food programs, such as community gardens and community meals, can offer temporary relief from hunger, they do not address the root cause. Research consistently shows that food insecurity is most effectively reduced through income-based solutions^{1,2}.

Food Insecurity in Middlesex-London

In 2023, one in four households in Middlesex-London were food insecure⁶ - the highest rate reported in Middlesex-London since the Canadian Income Survey started measuring food insecurity in 2019. This marked a statistically significant increase from 2022, with an estimated 151,477 residents living in food insecure households in 2023, compared to 107,835 residents in 2022.^{6,7}

As reported to the Board of Health in Q4 2024, the 2024 local Nutritious Food Basket results demonstrate decreased food affordability and inadequate income to afford basic needs for many Middlesex-London residents⁸. A single person receiving Ontario Works needs an additional \$522 monthly to afford local rent and food costs, plus additional funds for all other expenses⁸. [Report No. 82-24](#) includes additional household and income scenarios.

Municipal Strategies to Address Food Insecurity

MLHU established and chaired a provincial work group in partnership with the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health to develop resources and messaging aimed at reducing household food insecurity. The resulting municipal primer, adapted by MLHU for local municipalities, outlines strategies to address household food insecurity ([Appendix A](#)). Municipal governments are important partners in addressing food insecurity, and the primer provides a range of income-based strategies that London and Middlesex County can implement. The primer also includes affordability-based strategies, which can help reduce financial strain and contribute to more inclusive, resilient and healthy communities.

References are affixed as [Appendix B](#).

Next Steps

It is recommended that the Board of Health direct Health Unit staff to share “Household Food Insecurity: A Primer for Municipalities” ([Appendix A](#)) with the City of London, Middlesex County, lower tier municipalities within the County of Middlesex, and Ontario Boards of Health.

The Health Unit will continue to monitor food affordability as mandated by the [Ontario Public Health Standards](#) in the [Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2018](#). The 2025 surveillance data will be reported to the Board of Health in Q4 2025.

This report was written by the Municipal and Community Health Promotion Team of the Family and Community Health Division.



Alexander Summers, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health



Emily Williams, BScN, RN, MBA, CHE
Chief Executive Officer

This report refers to the following principle(s) set out in Policy G-490, Appendix A:

- The Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2018; and the Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being and Healthy Growth and Development standards, as outlined in the [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability](#).
- The following goal or direction from the [Middlesex-London Health Unit's Strategic Plan](#):
 - Our public health programs are effective, grounded in evidence and equity

This topic has been reviewed to be in alignment with goals under the Middlesex-London Health Unit's [Anti-Black Racism Plan](#) and [Taking Action for Reconciliation](#), specifically recommendations:

Anti-Black Racism Plan [Recommendation #37](#): Lead and/or actively participate in healthy public policy initiatives focused on mitigating and addressing, at an upstream level, the negative and inequitable impacts of the social determinants of health which are priority for local ACB communities and ensure the policy approaches take an anti-Black racism lens.

Taking Action for Reconciliation [Supportive Environments](#): Establish and implement policies to sustain a supportive environment, as required, related to the identified recommendations.

Household Food Insecurity: A Primer for Municipalities

Household food insecurity refers to inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.¹ For simplicity, household food insecurity will be referred to as food insecurity in this primer.

While food programs, such as community gardens and community meals, can offer temporary relief from hunger, they do not address the root cause. Research consistently shows that food insecurity is most effectively reduced through income-based solutions.¹

Food insecurity and poverty are pressing issues that municipalities can help address.

This resource provides a range of income-based strategies that municipalities can implement to make a meaningful impact in their communities. It also includes affordability-focused strategies, which can help reduce financial strain and contribute to more inclusive, resilient communities.



Adapted from:

“Food Insecurity: A Primer for Municipalities” developed by the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH) Food Insecurity Workgroup (www.odph.ca).

Adapted by:

Middlesex-London Health Unit

For more information, contact us:

Middlesex-London Health Unit

Phone: 519-663-5317

Email: health@mlhu.on.ca

Food Insecurity: A Primer for Municipalities

Household Food Insecurity in Middlesex-London

Food insecurity means not having enough money for food.¹

In 2023, 25% of Middlesex-London households were food insecure.²

1 in 4



Food Affordability

After rent and food, many don't have enough left for all other monthly expenses.³

Single parent of 2 on Ontario Works

 **\$257**

Single person on Ontario Works

 **-\$522**

Wages

Having a job does not guarantee food security.

In 2022, over half (58.6%) of food-insecure households in Ontario depended on employment income.¹

Food Insecurity Takes a Toll on our Community

Physical and Mental Health



-  risk of diabetes and heart disease¹
-  risk of depression, anxiety, and mood disorders¹

Health Care Costs



23%-121% higher health care costs⁴

In 2017, Ontario municipal governments contributed **\$2.1 billion** for health care costs⁵

Community Well-Being



-  barriers to employment⁶
-  social isolation⁶
- impede people's ability to advance in life⁶

Solutions

Food insecurity is an income problem that requires income solutions.

Municipalities can support policies and initiatives that improve the finances of households with low incomes and advocate for a stronger social safety net.

Income-Based Strategies



1. Support living wage certification

Ontario's minimum wage is less than a living wage. A living wage is the hourly pay a worker must earn to afford their basic needs and engage in their community based on regional living costs.⁷ Paying a living wage benefits employers (e.g., employee retention), employees (e.g., afford housing and food), and the community (e.g., money spent locally).^{8,9}

The minimal annual employer certification fee helps support the [Ontario Living Wage Network](#) to calculate the living wage and advance the living wage movement.

- Become a Living Wage employer and recertify annually (e.g., Township of Blandford-Blenheim, City of Waterloo, Corporation of the City of St. Catharines, The County of Huron, The Municipality of North Perth).
- Encourage local businesses to become Living Wage employers (e.g., provide education and awareness, incentives like public recognition of [local Living Wage employers](#), community engagement and support).
- Provide support for local businesses to become certified (e.g., practical guidance, marketing incentives, and policy support).

Resource: [Living Wage Certification Process](#)



2. Support free income tax filing clinics for households with lower incomes

Filing income taxes is essential to be eligible for subsidized housing and receiving federal government [benefits and credits](#). In 2023, nearly \$44 million was received in refunds, credits, and benefits entitlements by 11,070 individuals through free tax clinics in London, Ontario through the [Community Volunteer Income Tax Program](#).¹⁰

- Promote clinics and help to recruit volunteers (e.g., [London tax clinics](#), [Strathroy tax clinics](#)).
- Provide subsidized transportation to clinics (e.g., transportation vouchers).
- Provide community spaces for clinics at no cost.
- Support systems navigation at clinics (e.g., promote community resources and governmental benefits, and make referrals to community resources).
- Coordinate existing income tax clinics and improve client support at tax clinics by offering more [super clinics](#) in the community.
- Advocate for policies that simplify tax filing for community members living with a low income (e.g., automated system using existing information).
- Explore the promotion of [virtual tax-filing](#) in partnership with local organizations and [Prosper Canada](#).

Resource: [Guide to Hosting an Enhanced Free Community Volunteer Income Tax Program \(CVITP\)](#)



3. Work with the provincial and federal governments to advance income-based policies and income support programs

The current income support system in Ontario is not adequate for households to cover their basic needs and live with dignity.¹

- Support the advocacy work of local partnerships (e.g., endorse advocacy letters sent to the provincial and federal governments by local partnerships) (e.g., [United Way Elgin Middlesex](#)).

- Advocate to the provincial government to:
 - a. Raise the minimum wage to be on par with the cost of living (living wage).
 - b. Increase social assistance rates to reflect the real cost of living (e.g., [Middlesex-London Board of Health, 2023](#); [Prince Edward-Lennox & Addington, 2025](#); [Niagara Region, 2024](#); [Prince Edward County, 2024](#); [Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit, 2025](#))
 - c. Index Ontario Works (OW) rates to inflation and increase the amount of income exempt from reduction of benefits to better support those working toward leaving the OW program (e.g., [Orangeville, 2023](#); [AMO, 2024](#))
 - d. Commit to not reduce or claw back any provincial assistance related to the implementation of the Canada Disability Benefit (e.g., [London, 2025](#)).
- Advocate to the federal government to:
 - a. Expand the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) by increasing the amount for lowest income households and equalizing the benefit for families with children over 6 years old (e.g., [Peterborough Public Health, 2024](#); [PROOF, 2023](#)).
 - b. Enhance the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) by increasing the benefit amount and simplifying the application process by working with provinces and territories to automatically enroll recipients of provincial and territorial disability support programs (e.g., [Community Food Centres Canada, 2024](#)).
- Endorse basic income (e.g., [Municipality of Chatham-Kent Council, 2024](#); [Ottawa City Council, 2024](#); [numerous Ontario municipalities](#)) and advocate for the provincial and federal governments to collaborate to implement a basic income (e.g., [Kitchener City Council, 2024](#); [Region of Waterloo, 2023](#); [Halton Region, 2023](#); [Hamilton City Council, 2023](#)).

Resource: [PROOF – Identifying Policy Options to Reduce Household Food Insecurity in Canada](#)



4. Raise awareness within the community about food insecurity and its connection to income

- Utilize reports from public health units to obtain local data on food insecurity and food affordability (e.g., [Middlesex-London Health Unit, 2024](#))
- Engage with community partners to promote the need for long-term solutions to food insecurity (e.g., fund a forum)
- Communicate about food insecurity from a poverty reduction perspective (e.g., need for income-based solutions), and not as an issue of food access or food literacy (e.g., more food banks or food literacy programs)
- Declare food insecurity an emergency (e.g., [City of Kingston Council, 2025](#); [Mississauga, 2024](#); [Toronto City Council, 2024](#); [City of Brantford, 2025](#))

Resource: [Position Statement and Recommendations on Responses to Food Insecurity](#)



5. Create and support a municipal poverty reduction strategy

Municipal poverty reduction strategies address specific challenges and action plans tailored to the municipality complementing provincial and federal level strategies (e.g., [London \(2017\)](#); [Ottawa \(2025-2029\)](#); [Toronto \(2019-2022\)](#)).¹¹

- Provide funds to implement action(s) from a Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Allocate higher amounts of funding towards food and housing insecurity.
- Actively engage people who have lived and/or have living experience of food insecurity and/or poverty.

Resource: [Tamarack Institute Ending Poverty Network for Change](#)



6. Provide leadership and support to local partnerships working to reduce food insecurity and/or poverty (e.g., Age Friendly London Network and Child & Youth Network, Middlesex-London Food Policy Council, Basic Income London)

- Explore forming a local partnership, if not already operating.
- Support the advocacy work of local partnerships (e.g., endorsing advocacy letters).
- Collaborate with community partners to determine local priorities for action to address food insecurity and poverty.
- Become a member of a local partnership.
- Provide funding (e.g., supporting a specific action item).

Resource: [Food Systems Planning in Canada: A toolkit of priority practices for planners](#)

Affordability-Based Strategies



7. Support affordable housing

Encouraging an adequate supply of affordable housing is critical to ensuring households can afford other basic necessities, such as food. Municipalities and regional governments play a critical role in shaping housing affordability through land use planning, investment, and policy advocacy.

Affordable housing is a priority for the City of London and Middlesex County (e.g., [Health & Homelessness in London, Ontario: A Whole of Community System Response \(2023\)](#) [The Housing Stability Action Plan for the City of London \(2019-2024\)](#); [Middlesex County's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan \(2019-2024\)](#)).



8. Improve the affordability and accessibility of local public programs and services

- Invest in accessible and affordable transportation by providing subsidized transportation passes or subsidizing rural transportation services (e.g., [London, Toronto, Waterloo](#)).
- Offer childcare subsidies to eligible families, prioritizing individuals who are most financially in need (e.g., [London-Middlesex \(2024-2028\)](#), [Middlesex County, London, Kingston](#)).
- Provide discounted and/or subsidized recreation programs at municipal facilities (e.g., [Middlesex County, London, Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston](#)).
- Support and promote local financial literacy and counselling programs (e.g., [CPA Canada, London, Toronto](#)).
- Implement Community Connector and Community Navigator roles in municipalities, libraries, and other community organizations to support residents with applications to housing programs, social assistance, free income tax clinics, and other necessary supports (e.g., [Middlesex County Libraries, London Family Centres, Durham, Huron Perth](#)).

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1. Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA, Tarasuk V. Household food insecurity in Canada, 2022 [Internet]. Toronto: Research to Identify Policy Options to Reduce Food Insecurity (PROOF); 2023 [cited 2025 Jun 10]. Available from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>
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COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: Krystal
Seconded By: Julita

DATE: October 22, 2025
Resolution No. 25-226

WHEREAS, the availability and quality of home care services across rural Ontario is inadequate, inconsistent and often unreliable; and

WHEREAS, the availability of both low intensity services and assisted living services and accommodation is either absent or inadequate; and

WHEREAS, distances to hospitals, hospice, and healthcare clinics can be prohibitive to care; and

WHEREAS, access to primary care can be precarious; and

WHEREAS, in most cases patients choose care in their own home rather than institutionalized care; and

WHEREAS, patient-centered services to support a broad scope of "activities of daily living" tasks contributes to quality of life and reduces pressures on emergency rooms, hospitals and other health care providers; and

WHEREAS, such a model has been shown to work across then rural municipalities in central Algoma under the Township of St-Joseph's Central Algoma PSW Outreach Pilot Program by allowing patients to stay in their own homes, or transition back to their homes, thus relieving pressures on Emergency Rooms, hospital beds, long-term care homes and caregivers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville requests that the Ontario Ministry of Health commit its full support to flexible and innovative approaches like the Central Algoma PSW Outreach Pilot Program to ensure the provision of publicly-funded and patient-centred home care services in rural Ontario communities; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, where services are not currently adequately delivered or available, initiatives for home care could include light housekeeping services and meal prep, personal care, monitoring changes in status, respite care, and palliative care depending on the needs of the patient; and

Rural Home Care Initiatives

Whereas, the availability and quality of home care services across rural Ontario is inadequate, inconsistent and often unreliable,

Whereas, the availability of both low intensity services and assisted living services and accommodation is either absent or inadequate,

Whereas, distances to hospitals, hospice, and healthcare clinics can be prohibitive to care,

Whereas, access to primary care can be precarious,

Whereas, in most cases patients choose care in their own home rather than institutionalized care,

Whereas, patient-centered services to support a broad scope of “activities of daily living” tasks contributes to quality of life and reduces pressures on emergency rooms, hospitals and other health care providers,

Whereas, such a model has been shown to work across ten rural municipalities in central Algoma under the Township of St. Joseph’s Central Algoma PSW Outreach Pilot Program by allowing patients to stay in their own homes, or transition back to their homes, thus relieving pressures on Emergency Rooms, hospital beds, long-term care homes and caregivers,

Therefore Be It Resolved, the _____ requests that the Ontario Ministry of Health commit its full support to flexible and innovative approaches like the Central Algoma PSW Outreach Pilot Program to ensure the provision of publicly-funded and patient-centred home care services in rural Ontario communities,

Further Be It Resolved, where services are not currently adequately delivered or available, initiatives for home care could include light housekeeping services and meal prep, personal care, monitoring changes in status, respite care, and palliative care depending on the needs of the patient,

Further Be it Resolved, that, where possible, such an initiative will be integrated into the primary care model for its geographic area.

And, that this resolution be shared with the Ontario Premier, Minister of Health, Minister of Long-term Care, Minister of Rural Affairs, Ontario Health, Algoma Ontario Health Team, the Leader of the Opposition and Critic for the Ministry of Health.

Sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

lrcminister@ontario.ca

minister.mra@ontario.ca

Terry.Tilleczek@ontariohealth.ca

Brian.ktytor@ontariohealth.ca

info@algomaoh.ca

mstiles-qp@ndp.on.ca

gelinis-qp@ndp.on.ca

BuildON North: A RoadSmart Workforce to Support Northern Development

The Challenge and Opportunity

Northern Ontario municipalities face a critical workforce challenge: they need skilled road construction and maintenance workers but lack accessible training opportunities. Municipal employers consistently request northern training access, yet when traditional training is offered, budget constraints and staff shortages create barriers to participation. Workers must travel hundreds of kilometers to access quality professional development, often from commercial providers focused on product sales rather than practical municipal applications.

This workforce challenge takes on heightened urgency as Ontario advances Ring of Fire development—the province's largest economic opportunity in generations. The Ring of Fire infrastructure begins with roads: all-season access roads to mining sites; evolving transportation networks from gravel to paved; and entirely new road systems serving communities that have never required municipal road services. The initiative's success depends on specialized municipal expertise: winter road operations, remote maintenance protocols, and infrastructure scaling capabilities that Northern Ontario currently lacks easy access to develop.

Good Roads' Solution: BuildON North

Good Roads addresses this challenge through BuildON North, a comprehensive workforce development initiative that brings training directly to northern workers while building sustainable capacity for ongoing skills development. This carefully sequenced initiative responds directly to Ontario's need for a skilled workforce to deliver the infrastructure that will unlock the Ring of Fire and strengthen communities across the north.

Organizational Capacity and Proven Success

As Ontario's premier municipal training organization, Good Roads serves 433 of the province's 444 municipalities (98% coverage) and 21 First Nations training 3,000 municipal workers annually. Over three years, we've achieved remarkable growth in online training delivery, expanding from 0 to 500 annual users with exceptional outcomes: 80%+ completion rates and 85%+ pass rates. Our eLearning platform addresses Northern Ontario's unique challenges through low-bandwidth optimization and flexible scheduling that adapts to shift work and seasonal demands. Professional certifying organizations including AORS, OACETT, EIC, and MEA accept our courses, ensuring training translates directly to career advancement.

Comprehensive Training Delivery

BuildON North delivers skills development through four integrated components reaching over 1,000 participants. These are:

1. Northern Road School (250 participants)

The centerpiece of the project is a two-week intensive training event in Thunder Bay (Fall 2026) offering ten specialized courses in road construction, maintenance, and inspection. Beginning with the development of promotional materials, updated application packages, and logistics planning, the program will deliver hands-on learning from municipal subject matter experts. Subsidized registrations eliminate both travel and cost barriers, providing immediate access that municipalities cannot accommodate within existing budgets. The event will be followed by structured learner feedback surveys, ensuring future iterations continue to improve and respond to community needs.

2. First Nations Capacity Building (125 participants)

This stream focuses on flexible, community-responsive training delivered onsite in First Nations communities or through subsidized access to our standard courses. The project contains a subsidy program to guarantee equitable access to training for First Nations learners. Onsite delivery of Heavy Equipment Operator and Winter Maintenance training will take place directly in communities. Our approach respects community self-determination—partners identify needs, and we design appropriate interventions.

This authentic Indigenous partnership is reflected in Good Roads' governance where our board president is headed by its first Indigenous president. In 2026, we are expanding our board to include two dedicated First Nations seats, with Chiefs of Ontario nominating candidates annually to ensure ongoing Indigenous representation. A mid-project review with First Nations partners will provide opportunity to reflect on successes and challenges, adjusting delivery as needed.

3. A Northern Ontario Focused eLearning Platform (125 participants)

The project prioritizes development of five online courses that specifically address Northern Ontario needs while extending and deepening learning from Northern Road School. This platform is not simply a replication of classroom content, but rather is designed to allow participants to continue professional development after in-person training concludes.

For northern and remote communities, this approach offers multiple benefits such as: reducing travel costs and time; ensuring flexible access regardless of location or work schedule; and creating sustainable learning pathways aligned with communities preparing for Ring of Fire development. The development process includes:

- Subject matter expert input
- Design and development by D2L
- Beta testing with municipal workers
- Iterative revisions based on learner feedback

Once finalized, these courses will launch on a digital platform for continuous enrollment, making high-quality training permanently accessible across Ontario.

4. Workforce Development Capacity

Sheridan College internships will provide specialized support in illustration, video production, marketing, and communications. Over the summer, students will complete 420 hours of work, gaining hands-on experience while directly supporting the development and evaluation of training programs. These internships provide valuable professional experience for students while expanding the project's delivery capacity and creating authentic visual content for future municipal sector professionals.

Sustainable Impact and Innovation

BuildON North's innovation lies in access equity and employer-driven design. Our municipal membership model ensures training directly serves workforce needs while our proven eLearning platform overcomes geographic and bandwidth limitations. The project creates lasting capacity through:

- Online courses continue serving learners beyond the grant period;
- First Nations partnerships that build ongoing relationships;
- Documented best practices inform future northern workforce development; and
- Professional pathways are established through post-secondary internships.

The initiative is fully aligned with the Government of Ontario's vision of the Ring of Fire as a nation-building opportunity. By equipping First Nations communities with technical skills, scaling eLearning to overcome geographic barriers, and building the road construction and maintenance capacity needed to deliver large-scale projects, BuildON North provides the skilled workforce essential to unlocking Ontario's future and Northern Ontario's full potential.

With 98% of Ontario's municipalities invested in Good Roads' success and demonstrated demand from northern employers struggling with succession planning and competitive hiring markets, BuildON North delivers immediate workforce strengthening while building sustainable training infrastructure supporting northern Ontario's economic transformation—from current municipal needs through Ring of Fire development and beyond.



Council Report

From: Pascale Gamache, Administrative Assistant **Date:** October 14, 2025

Subject: New Fire Department Personnel (Firefighter)

Purpose: Designate a new firefighter to join the volunteer fire department team.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Mr. Miguel Sigouin be considered for appointment as a new firefighter, as he has recently expressed a genuine interest in serving with the fire department.

History: Miguel is presently engaged as an apprentice mechanic at Alamos Gold Inc..

Analysis: The firefighting team currently comprises thirteen (13) members. To ensure we maintain adequate staffing levels for effective response to emergency situations, it is recommended considering the addition of a few additional team members.

Financial: According to the points system outlined in the annual budget plan.

We look forward to receiving a favorable response to facilitate Miguel's initiation of training with the fire department.

Thank you!

Patrick Sigouin
Fire Chief

COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: Krystal
Seconded By: Hélène

DATE: October 22, 2025
Resolution No. 25-229

Whereas that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby wishes to acknowledge and approve the attached email request dated October 20, 2025 from Galaxy Broadband with regards to the installation of a small antenna on our municipal complex rooftop, as presented.

✓	_____	_____	_____
Carried	Defeated	Deferred	

RECORDED VOTE:	YES	NO
Councillor Hélène Perth	_____	_____
Councillor Krystal Lévesque	_____	_____
Councillor Julila Hemphill	_____	_____
Councillor Jr. Vallières	_____	_____
Mayor Beverly Nantel	_____	_____

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof:

TOWNSHIP OF DUBREUILVILLE

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section of Manual - F -	Effective Date May 26, 2011
Subject FLOWERS OR FRUIT BASKET PURCHASE	
Department ALL	Resolution No.11-177 By-law No.

That the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville hereby adopts a policy for the purchase of flowers or fruit baskets for any active member of the municipal staff, members of Council and immediate family in the event of a death and long term hospitalization due to injury or sickness. Immediate family being defined as per Township Employee Collective Agreement; and

That the CAO-Clerk or designate be responsible and authorized to requisition such flowers or fruit baskets for the above mentioned purpose to a limit of \$65.00.



By-Law No. 2025-41

Being a By-law to confirm the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville at its regular meeting held on October 22, 2025.

WHEREAS Section 9 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, Chapter 25, provides that a municipality has the capacity, rights, powers and privileges of a natural person for the purpose of exercising its authority under this or any other Act; and

WHEREAS Section 5(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, Chapter 25, provides that the powers of a municipal corporation are to be exercised by its Council; and

WHEREAS Section 5(3) of the said Municipal Act provides that the powers of every Council are to be exercised by by-law; and

WHEREAS it is deemed expedient that the proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville at the October 22, 2025, meeting be confirmed and adopted through a confirmatory by-law;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville enacts the following as a By-Law:

1. The actions of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville in respect of each recommendation and in respect of each motion and resolution passed, and other action taken by Council at the October 22, 2025, meeting is hereby adopted, ratified and confirmed as if all such proceedings were expressly embodied in this By-Law.
2. That where no individual by-law has been or is passed with respect to the taking of any action authorized in or by the above-mentioned minutes or with respect to the exercise of any powers by the Council in the above-mentioned minutes, then this by-law shall be deemed for all purposes to be the by-law required for approving and authorizing and taking of any action authorized therein or thereby, or required for the exercise of any powers therein by the Council.
3. That the Mayor and the CAO-Clerk of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the said action of the Council or to obtain approvals where required and, except where otherwise provided, the Mayor and the CAO-Clerk are hereby directed to execute all documents necessary on behalf of the Corporation of the Township of Dubreuilville and to affix the Corporate Seal thereto.

4. That this By-law shall come into force and take effect upon the passing thereof.

READ a first, second and third time and be finally passed this 22nd day of October 2025.

Bywaite
MAYOR

Shelley B. Cary
CAO-CLERK



COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: Julila
Seconded By: Helene

DATE: October 22, 2025
Resolution No. 25-232

Whereas that we adjourn to go in closed session at 7:57 p.m.

11.1 The meeting is held for the purpose of discussing personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; (Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, s. 239 (2) (b)).

✓

<u>Carried</u>	<u>Defeated</u>	<u>Deferred</u>
----------------	-----------------	-----------------

RECORDED VOTE:	YES	NO
Councillor Hélène Perth	___	___
Councillor Krystel Lévesque	___	___
Councillor Julila Hemphill	___	___
Councillor Jr. Vallières	___	___
Mayor Beverly Nantel	___	___

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: Helene
Seconded By: Krystel

DATE: October 22, 2025
Resolution No. 25-234

Whereas that Council authorizes the Treasurer to reverse the entry in the budget with regards to the SEED Homes revenue \$146,912-



Carried

Defeated

Deferred

RECORDED VOTE:

YES

NO

Councillor Hélène Perth
Councillor Krystel Lévesque
Councillor Julila Hemphill
Councillor Jr. Vallières
Mayor Beverly Nantel

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION



Moved By: _____ *Helene*
Seconded By: _____ *Krystel*

DATE: **October 22, 2025**
Resolution No. **25-235**

Whereas that this regular municipal council meeting dated October 22, 2025 hereby adjourn at 8:39 p.m.



Carried

Defeated

Deferred

RECORDED VOTE:

YES

NO

Councillor H el ene Perth
Councillor Krystel L evesque
Councillor Julila Hemphill
Councillor Jr. Valli eres
Mayor Beverly Nantel

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof: