



CANADA

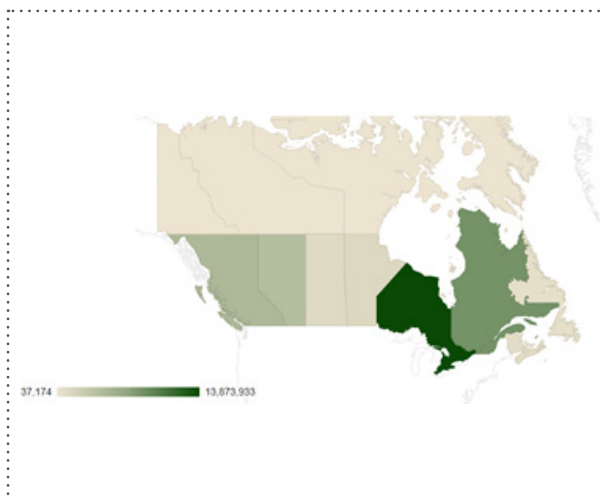
INSIGHT PAPER

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Date: 20.05.2019

RURality

Canadian urban/rural population.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

<https://canadaimmigrants.com/canada-population-by-province>

Of the total Canadian population, nearly 20 percent live in rural areas (according to the 2016 Census). Across Canada, small and rural communities have a greater and faster growing proportion of elderly residents than urban areas do. As seniors age and face a reduced ability to drive, they become more dependent on other travel options to meet personal needs such as shopping, medical care and social engagements.

SHARE OF PEOPLE LIVING IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS

80%

Share of people living
urban areas

20%

Share of people
living in rural areas

Source: *National Census, 2016*



Photo from Envato

GEOGRAPHY

Canada is comprised of ten provinces with a population of 35,151,728 residents (according to the 2016 census), but its population density, at 3.7 inhabitants per km², is among the lowest in the world. The largest metropolitan areas by population are Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, accounting for nearly 11 million inhabitants. Canada is bordered by several US states such as Alaska, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Washington.

Canada has one of the highest per-capita immigration rates in the world, driven mainly by economic policy and, to a lesser extent, family reunification. New immigrants settle mostly in major urban areas such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

At the beginning of the year 2017, 24.4 percent of the Canadian population was 60 years or older.

In common with many other developed countries, Canada is currently experiencing a demographic shift towards an older population, with more retirees and fewer people of working age. In 2006, the average age was 39.5 years, whereas by 2011, it had risen to approximately 39.9 years.

NATIONAL POLICIES RELATING TO RURAL MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

As the Canadian government has one the most decentralised structures in the world (i.e. Federal level, Provinces/Territories and Municipalities), its policies and strategies are extremely diversified across such differing government structures.

Federal government can indirectly influence both land development patterns and travel behaviour through changes in taxation and direct financial contributions, whereas Provincial government policies and strategies can have a more direct impact.

The **Ontario Provincial Policy Statement** includes policies on transportation systems and requires that “transportation and land use considerations be integrated at all stages of the planning process”. It promotes a land use pattern, density and mix of uses “that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support the development of viable choices and plans for public transit and other alternative transportation modes, including commuter rail and bus.”



Photo from Envato

Indeed, whilst **Provincial/Territorial Governments** do not produce any high-level Development Plans for economic activity nor any overall Transport Plans, policy and planning for land use development and transport systems are within their institutional responsibilities. Provinces typically have a “**Planning Act**” which specifies principles and standards for land use development.

For example, the **Province of Ontario’s Planning Act** requires that municipal plans be consistent with a “Provincial Policy Statement” issued by the relevant Ministry.

Municipal policies and strategies involve land use planning in the form of official plans, density and subdivision controls, priorities for spending on roads and transit, fares and cost recovery targets for transit, parking regulations associated with new development, and priorities for the use of road space. Municipal land use and transportation policies directly affect the form of land use development, mixed land use, performance of the transportation system, and both how, where and when individuals travel.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Although the Canadian Federal Government has long recognised the function of serving mobility needs of urban and rural communities, its federalised institutional setting has resulted in a responsibility shift of organising local transport services towards provinces and/or municipal governments.

The **Federal Government** does not indeed own much of the national transport network, nor operate many transport services. Whilst main rail, air and marine networks and facilities are managed and operated by private profit-making corporations (rail) or not-for-profit corporations (airports, ports, air navigation, etc.), the road network is provided and managed by **Provinces/Territories and Municipalities**.

It is also worth noting that there is no federal funding of public transportation in Canada, however the Canadian federal government still retains important responsibility for safety standards for all new vehicles.

In addition, while the Federal Government has become a provider of substantial subsidies to Provinces/Territories for highways and to Municipal Governments for urban transit, it negotiates the funding levels and principles with the relevant partners but does not become involved in planning the networks or services.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past few decades, Canada has seen an increase in the number of public transit and intercity bus services operating nationwide, with some of them being only available to specific target groups to serve school, health, or social transport needs. These services are operated by public agencies, private operators for profit, publicly subsidized but privately provided operators, and non-profit volunteer groups.

The last two decades were characterized by the total elimination of specific transport subsidy programs in some provinces, and intense scrutiny of all remaining governmental-supported activities. As a result, government agencies and operators have begun to look at the overall public transportation picture, and specifically focus on the **coordination of public transportation services**.

The **Ontario Community Transportation Action Programme (CTAP)** provides a broad useful definition of community transportation:

"Community Transportation represents all the resources -- human, financial and physical -- that are used within

a community to plan or deliver transportation services locally to members of the public". CTAP further defined four community transportation sectors service the needs of local rural communities:

Public Transportation: provided by municipalities for the general public and for people with specialised transport needs; **School Transportation:** provided by private school bus operators through contracts with school boards; **Health Transportation** provided through public or private ambulance operators, hospitals and long-term care agencies; **Social transportation:** provided through agencies servicing people with developmental disabilities, day care centres and social service agencies.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Transport Canada is the department within the Federal Government of Canada responsible for developing regulations, policies and services of transportation in Canada, and acts with a shared responsibility among the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government. The operation and regulation of Canada's transport system relies on the close cooperation of all partners (including the private sector) to ensure safety, efficiency, environmental sustainability, and security.

The federal government has the constitutional authority to oversee international and inter-provincial transportation, while the provincial governments are responsible for intra-provincial transport services.

In recent years, federal transport policy has been placing a growing emphasis on marketplace frameworks to promote competition and efficiency while maintaining appropriate levels of safety of the Canadian transport ecosystem; this combination regulatory and marketplace approach is also reflected in the **Canada Transportation Act**, which stresses the importance of *"competition and market forces"* in the provision of *"viable and effective transportation services"* in Canada.



Photo from Envato

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The funding process to finance transport projects across Canada is very complex and includes a number of steps. The Federal Government management system is based on expenditure planning to support parliamentary decision-making on expenditures; the Federal Government submits its spending plans and an economic policy statement to the Parliament and asks for approval in the Federal Budget. Following this, funding to the Provincial/Territorial entities are made available in the form of contributions authorized by Parliament in various multi-year national infrastructure development programs, of varying magnitudes and duration.

At a more local level, the Municipal Government must first request funding for a rural transport project, with approval being requested from the regional government (provinces), which is also an extensive process.

Notwithstanding the complexity of the funding process, the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) has also been actively pursuing federal funding for public transport initiatives, while Infrastructure Canada's Public Transportation Fund has supported several rural communities such as British Columbia and Nova Scotia. In cases where rural communities have one major employer, municipalities can partner with employers to

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

create special transportation programs. However, given the intrinsically low demand levels characterizing rural transport, there may exist financial barriers and some difficulties to justify a transportation system that carries a small number of passengers over a long distance.

One of the most important programmes to provide financial support is **The Ontario Community Transportation Network (OCTN)**, developed by the Rural Ontario Institute and the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition with funding support from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation. The OCTN represents a community forum that includes municipalities, public transit providers, private sector transportation operators, health

and social agencies, community organizations, ride-sharing groups, transportation technology companies who are interested in advancing mobility options within their communities through promoting the sharing and exchange of experiences, ideas and information and other online and in-person networking activities.

Under the funding umbrella of OCTN, the Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program supports local municipalities to partner with community organizations to coordinate local transportation services, and improve their performances via resource sharing to increase both their customer basis and supply offer, i.e. the extent of the transit network.

OTHER INFORMATION

Best practice example 01: *Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program, Ontario*

In November 2014, Ontario Ministry of Transportation launched the Community Transportation (CT) Pilot Grant Program to provide financial assistance to Ontario municipalities that partnered with community organizations to optimise existing resources allocated for transportation services. The purpose of the CT program was to evaluate the viability of a community transportation service delivery model as an effective method for meeting travel demands of small, rural, and other underserved communities in Ontario. The 2014-2015 CT Pilot Program allowed municipalities the flexibility to collaborate with a range of community partners and to develop the service models and service levels that meet the specific needs of their community (<http://www.octn.ca/ct-pilot-program/community-transportation-pilot-grant-program>).

Best practice example 02: *Muskoka Extended Transit (MET), Ontario*

Transportation has been identified as one of the biggest barriers affecting people living in rural areas to access services in Muskoka, Ontario. The MET is a coordinated transportation system provided by a partnership of Muskoka's Community Services Department and two community organisations (Muskoka Seniors and Muskoka Family Focus, which both provide transport services to their respective target users) to build on the existing transport services to provide cost-effective

transportation to more residents than any of the organizations could offer independently.

The program has been using existing school buses to provide rural residents access to places such as hospitals and urban centres as well as community programs and services. The District received a \$100,000 funding grant from the Ministry of Transportation's Community Transportation Program to run the pilot rural transit program until March 2017 (www.muskoka.on.ca/en/community-and-social-services/MET-_Muskoka-Extended-Transit_.aspx).

Best practice example 03: *The Rural Overland Utility Transit (TROUT), Ontario*

TROUT provides public transport services in eight rural municipalities with approximately 15,000 permanent residents in central Ontario, Canada. The service is generally available for users requiring transportation for legal appointments, special programs, counseling appointments, medical appointments, day care, work placements, etc. TROUT encompasses various types of services, such as scheduled regional routes, door-to-door demand response, special event and charter transport, depending on community needs and resources. In 2015, the program had a \$300,000 total annual budget, of which \$60,000 is generated by fares and \$240,000 by public subsidies (<http://catchthetrout.ca>).

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND MINISTRIES ADDRESSING RURAL AREAS

TITLE	ROLE
AAFC	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsibility for policies governing the production, processing, and marketing of all farm, food, and agri-based products
PCH	Canadian Heritage, Federal Ministry - Responsibility for policies and programs regarding the arts, culture, media, communications networks, official languages, status of women, sports, and multiculturalism
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsible for social programs and the labour market at the federal level
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Federal Ministry - SSHRC creates policy, plans budgets, and directs priorities through a council established by the federal government
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsibility for coordinating environmental policies and programs as well as preserving and enhancing the natural environment and renewable resources
FIN	Finance Canada (Department of), Federal Ministry - Responsible for developing policies of sound economic management and providing expert advice to the government
HC	Health Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsibility for national public health
ISED	Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsible for fostering a growing, competitive, and knowledge-based Canadian economy. ISED specifically supports Canadian innovation efforts, trade and investment, enterprise growth, and customized economic development in Canadian communities
PSPC	Public Services and Procurement Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsibility for the government's internal servicing and administration
TC	Transport Canada, Federal Ministry - Responsible for developing regulations, policies and services of transportation in Canada
TSB	Transportation Safety Board of Canada - Responsible for advancing transportation safety in Canada
CTA	Canadian Transportation Agency - Responsible for decisions relating to federally regulated modes of transportation (air, rail and marine)
SRC	Strengthening Rural Canada Initiative (funded by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program) - Aimed at supporting rural communities across Canada find the solutions they need by utilizing their assets and capitalizing on local opportunities, while at the same time promoting the importance and value of rural communities to policymakers, researchers and the population
ROI	Rural Ontario Institute - ROI delivers programs that develop strong leaders who are critical voices around opportunities and key issues facing rural and northern Ontario
CRRF	Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation - Responsible for contributing to the revitalization and sustainability of rural Canada through collaborative research
OCTN	Ontario Community Transport Network - The OCTN connects individuals, organizations, and transportation providers interested in exchanging information, experiences and best practices about community transportation services in Ontario

LINKS TO WEBSITES

- Rural Ontario Institute www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/about
- Ontario Community Transport Network www.octn.ca
- Strengthening Rural Canada Initiative <http://strengtheningruralcanada.ca>
- Rural Revitalization Foundation <http://crrf.ca>
- State of Rural Canada <http://sorc.crrf.ca/intro>

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