

**Ministry of  
Transportation**

Office of the Minister

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Bureau de la ministre

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November 24, 2021

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Mr. Alan Spacek  
Commission Chair  
Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC)  
[ONTC.Chair@ontarionorthland.ca](mailto:ONTC.Chair@ontarionorthland.ca)

Dear Mr. Spacek:

As you begin planning for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, I am pleased to write to you in your capacity as Chair of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC). Pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, this letter sets out my expectations for the ONTC for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Ontario's board-governed agencies are vital partners in ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to Ontarians. The work that you and your fellow commissioners undertake to establish the goals, objectives, and strategic direction for the ONTC ensures that efficient, safe, and reliable transportation services are provided in Northern Ontario. It is important that this direction is consistent with government priorities, your agency mandate, key policies and directives and my directions, where appropriate. I thank you for your willingness to serve.

I wanted to recognize the hard work of the ONTC in supporting the economic recovery of the province by providing essential transportation services across Northern Ontario while prioritizing the safety and health of passengers, employees and the communities served during the challenging and unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic. The province will continue to work closely with its partners to support Ontario's families, workers and employers as we progress through recovery.

As part of the government of Ontario, agencies are expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value-for-money to taxpayers.

This includes, but is not limited to:

**1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management**

- Operating within your agency's financial allocations
- Identifying and pursuing opportunities for revenue generation, innovative practices, and/or improved program sustainability
- Complying with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization and Realty Interim Measures for agency office space

- Leveraging and meeting benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives
- Working with the ministry, where appropriate, to advance the *Ontario Onwards Action Plan*

## 2. **Transparency and Accountability**

- Abiding by applicable government directives and policies and ensuring transparency and accountability in reporting
- Adhering to requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive, accounting standards and practices, and the *Public Service of Ontario Act* ethical framework, and responding to audit findings, where applicable
- Identifying appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the board's role in agency governance and accountability

## 3. **Risk Management**

- Developing and implementing an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of risks, including planning for and responding to health and other emergency situations, including but not limited to COVID-19
- Developing a continuity of operations plan that identifies time critical/essential services and personnel

## 4. **Workforce Management**

- Optimizing your organizational capacity to support the best possible public service delivery
- Modernizing and redeploying resources to priority areas when or where they are needed

## 5. **Data Collection**

- Improving how the agency uses data in decision-making, information-sharing and reporting, including by leveraging available or new data solutions to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery
- Supporting transparency and privacy requirements of data work and data sharing with the ministry, as appropriate

## 6. **Digital Delivery and Customer Service**

- Exploring and implementing digitization or digital modernization strategies for online service delivery and continuing to meet and exceed customer service standards through transition
- Adopting digital approaches, such as user research, agile development and product management

## 7. **Diversity and Inclusion**

- Developing and encouraging initiatives promoting an inclusive, accessible, and diverse workplace
- Demonstrating leadership of an inclusive environment free of harassment

- Adopting a robust engagement process to ensure all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making

## **8. COVID-19 Recovery**

- Identifying and pursuing service delivery methods (digital or other) that have evolved since the start of COVID-19
- Supporting the recovery efforts from COVID-19

In addition to the commitments above, on-going reporting and engagement with the ministry will be critical as we work together to deliver on both government priorities and the transportation specific priorities below:

### **1. Delivery of efficient, safe and reliable transportation services in Northern Ontario**

- Ensuring that safe operations, for customers and communities, remain the highest priority while continuing to strive for the highest standards of safe and reliable services for passengers
- Taking into account the safety of Indigenous women, girls and other marginalized groups in planning, designing and delivering transportation services and taking actions to combat sexual exploitation and human trafficking (e.g. training of front-line employees, public awareness, reporting policies), in accordance with the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Ontario's Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy
- Take into account needs of, vulnerable, and underserved populations, including racialized people, Indigenous people, and people with disabilities in the planning, design and delivery of safe, equitable, and accessible transportation services
- Continuing to promote and provide essential transportation options for the movement of goods
- Working with intercommunity passenger transportation service providers to address service gaps and improve transportation options for passengers given the deregulation of the sector, which came into effect on July 1, 2021

### **2. Improvements to the efficiency and safety of ONTC operations and business lines**

- Collaborating with the ministry to consider innovative solutions and partnership opportunities to enhance people and goods transportation services in northern and rural communities, including Indigenous communities
- Continuing to work with the ministry to support the ongoing review of provincial rail safety, including supporting as necessary the planning and implementation of changes to strengthen rail safety and oversight across the province

### **3. Advancement of key transportation initiatives**

- Partnering with Metrolinx and the ministry to support the next stage of feasibility work for Northeastern Passenger Rail service between Toronto, North Bay and Timmins
- Continuing to engage with Indigenous communities and partners, local stakeholders and municipalities to identify needs, concerns, and collaborative opportunities related to the Northeastern Passenger Rail Updated Business Case and other business service opportunities
- Supporting the ministry in advancement of Connecting the North: A Draft Transportation Plan for Northern Ontario

### **4. Implementation of the Capital Asset Management Plan**

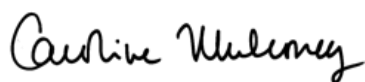
- Continuing implementation of the capital asset management plan to support the long-term sustainability of the agency and state of good repair of assets, reduce ongoing maintenance expenses, and provide improved safety to passengers and employees
- Developing business capabilities, processes, and technologies for ONTC to adhere to their Asset Management policy and principles, and to support the organization to mature Enterprise Asset Management practices in accordance with industry standards
- Maintaining ongoing improvements and investments in equipment and facilities; motor coaches and rolling stock; and bridges, culverts, and track infrastructure

### **5. Enhancement of Accountability and Governance**

- Working closely with the ministry to assess, develop and implement initiatives that would continue to modernize the agency and its enabling legislation
- Continuing the development of enhanced performance measures, including a technology-enabled data collection strategy and monitoring and evaluation processes on all business lines to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement on program effectiveness, operating efficiency, safety and service reliability
- Continuing to track and report on key project milestones and performance outcomes, such as the state of good repair for ONTC assets

I thank you and your fellow commissioners for your continued support, and for your valuable contributions. Should you have any questions/concerns, please feel free to contact Deputy LeBlanc ([Laurie.LeBlanc@ontario.ca](mailto:Laurie.LeBlanc@ontario.ca)).

Sincerely,



Caroline Mulroney  
Minister of Transportation