

# Preparing for Alberta's Growth by Securing Transportation and Utility Corridors

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## Issue

Establishing transportation and utility corridors reduce land-use conflicts and support effective growth management of communities and the related infrastructure.

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## Background

By 2046, Alberta's population of 4.3 million is expected to swell to 6.6 million. More residents will generate larger volumes of traffic, boost demand for utility services, and increase the likelihood of inter-municipal land-use conflicts. This is especially noteworthy in the Edmonton-Calgary corridor, as the projected population by 2046 shows 8 in 10 Albertans are expected to live within this region.<sup>1</sup>

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce believes the province can help pre-empt impending growth issues by acquiring a radiating network of transportation/utility corridors (TUCs) that can serve a multitude of purposes, now and in the future.

TUCs are vital for long-term planning between communities. They provide guaranteed corridors for transmission lines, pipelines, regional municipal utilities, telecommunications, and transportation. A network of TUCs will also reduce land-use conflicts, improve integration of communities, and encourage the development of Special Economic Zones for Alberta.

A proactive TUC strategy to link all of Alberta's urban centres and regions will not only help the Alberta government plan for future growth, but it will also provide the opportunity to develop a world-class provincial network of highways, rail lines, and transit systems designed to ensure the safe and efficient movement of goods and people.

Creating an integrated plan to secure these critical TUC corridors is a fundamental step to proactive provincial planning and doing so quickly will save significant funds. The time is right to act as the cost of acquiring TUCs throughout Alberta may become prohibitive and cause our province to forgo the opportunity that exists to shape our province's future in such a visionary fashion.

At a national level, there are corridor opportunities that could greatly enhance the economic position of Alberta & Canada's broader economy. In 2016 the Canadian Senate's Standing Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce released a study on the University of Calgary's proposal for a corridor that would connect Canada's north. The Canadian Northern Corridor is currently in conceptual form as researchers study the feasibility of "a network of multi-modal rights-of-way across middle and northern Canada" that "could address Canada's unique geographic, political, legal and economic challenges to trade and infrastructure development"<sup>2</sup>. In December 2019, the Minister of Transport was given a mandate to "work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to invest in Canada's trade corridors to

increase global market access for Canadian goods”<sup>3</sup>. The Alberta Chamber believes that Canada has a unique and vital opportunity for a national unity project.

The Alberta Chamber believes the Alberta government can provide strong leadership by acquiring all of the provincial corridors needed for the future, and by working with the federal government to invest in national corridors to secure a strong quality of life for Albertan’s into the future.

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**The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends the Government of Alberta:**

1. Continue to develop a province-wide transportation/utility corridor plan that will serve to integrate all urban centres and regions in Alberta;
2. Implement this proactive plan by securing transportation/utility corridor rights of way throughout Alberta with the potential for inter-urban rapid transit, freight networks, telecommunications, regional municipal utilities, transmission lines, pipelines, and the development of a comprehensive transportation system; and
3. Work with the federal government to progress nation-wide connection projects, for example, the Northern Corridor proposal.