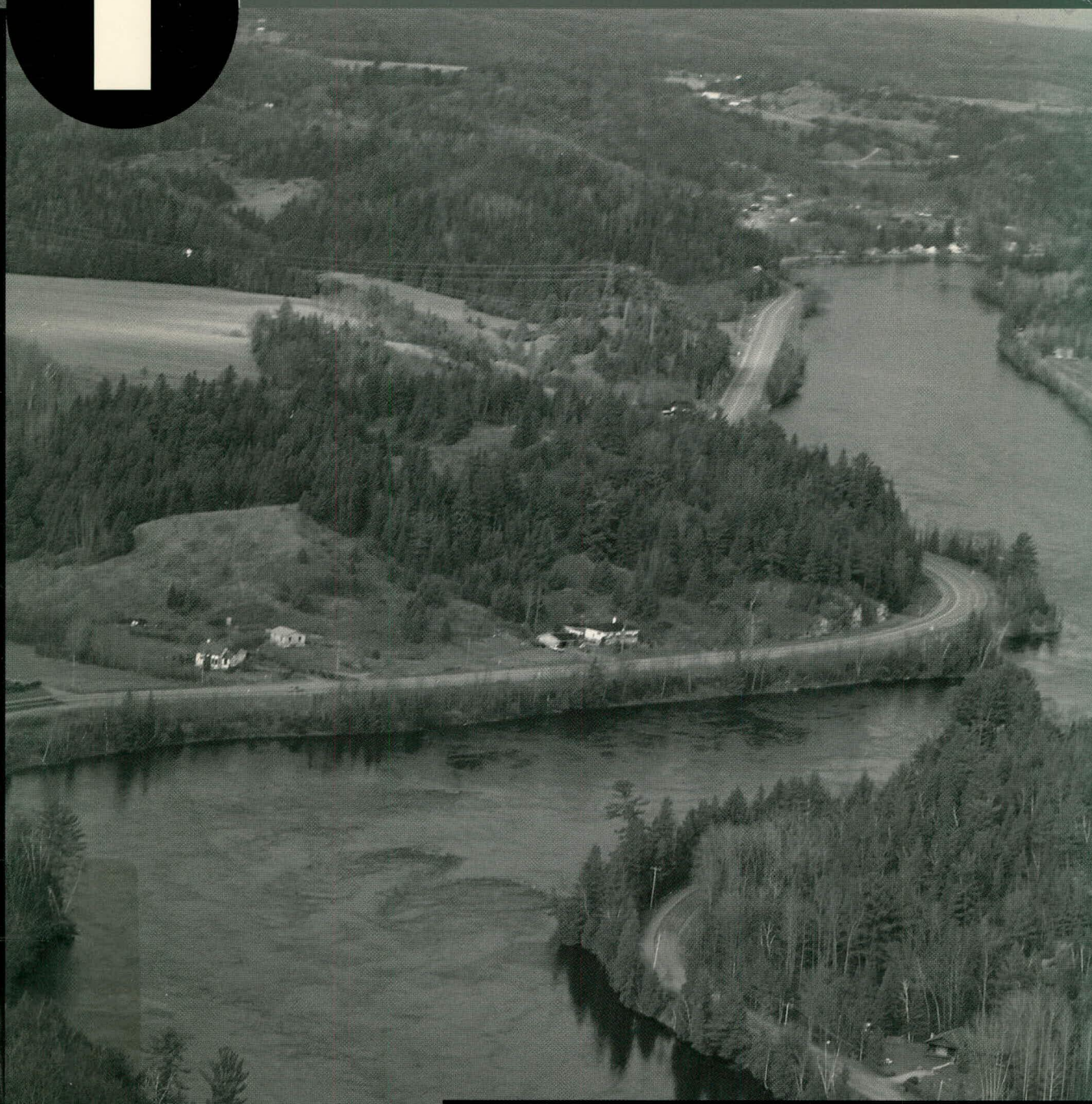
OUTAOUAIS

TRANSPORTATION PLANS



Québec

THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE OUTAOUAIS REGIONAL COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES (RCMS)

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

MINISTÈRE DES TRANSPORTS
DIRECTION DE L'OBSERVATOIRE EN TRANSPORT
SERVICE DE L'INNOVATION ET DE LA DOCUMENTATION
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This document was produced by the *Direction de la Planification* in collaboration with the *Direction de l'Outaouais* and the *Direction des Communications* of the *Ministère des Transports du Québec*.

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A TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE OUTAOUAIS

In 1992, Québec's Ministère des Transports (MTQ) began development of a transportation plan for the Outaouais region (Region 07). This was the first of a series of such plans to be drawn up for the various regions of the province. A transportation plan is the tool adopted by the MTQ to identify the actions most urgently needed to address transportation needs in each of Québec's regions.

• *A two-part transportation plan*

Given the highly specific nature of the transportation problems of the Communauté urbaine de l'Outaouais (the CUO) and of the neighbouring RCMs (Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, Collines-de-l'Outaouais, Papineau and Pontiac), the MTQ plan was developed in two parts. This consultation document focuses on the RCM aspect of the plan.

• *The progress to date*

Development of the transportation plan includes several steps. First, the MTQ studied the existing transportation situation in the Outaouais, which required the collection and analysis of a body of technical data leading to the release in 1993 of a preliminary document describing the problems and defining orientations and objectives. In October 1993, this document became the focus of a consultation with experts from the fields of transportation, land-use planning and economic development.

Following this analysis of the existing situation and the resulting identification of orientations and objectives, the MTQ drew up a number of development scenarios. This step was completed in March 1994 and the proposed content of the transportation plan is to be submitted for public consultation in May and June 1994.

WHY PUBLIC CONSULTATION?

The MTQ wishes to consult all the decision-makers, as well as the population of the Outaouais RCMs, to

— **inform them** of the existing and foreseeable transportation situation in the Outaouais RCMs, and
— **obtain their opinions** regarding the proposed orientations and the means recommended for implementing them.

The MTQ will consider these opinions before finalizing the transportation plan.

WHAT IS THE EXISTING AND FORESEEABLE TRANSPORTATION SITUATION?

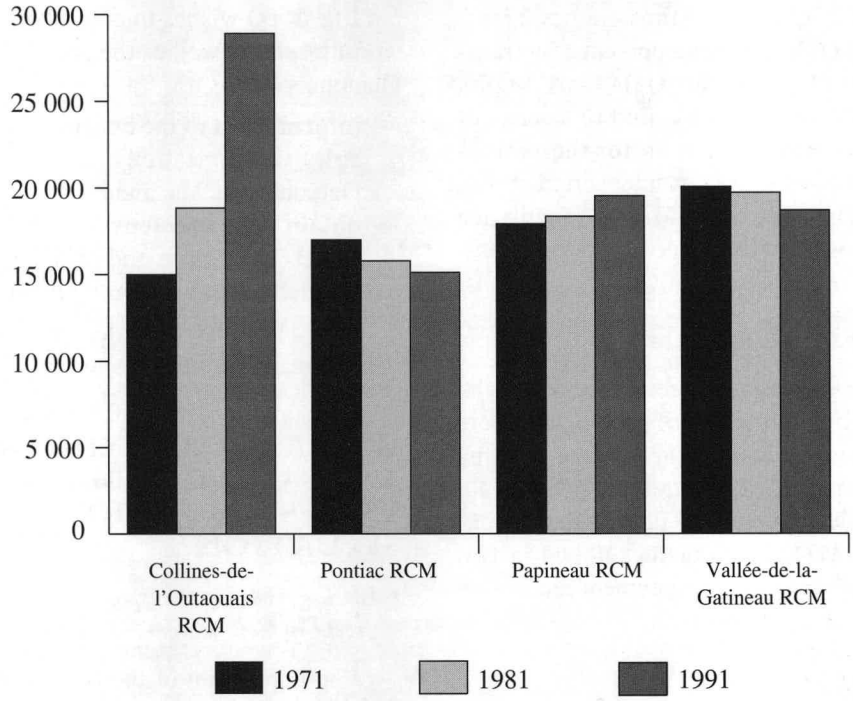
• *Little growth in transportation demand, except in Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCM*

The population of the RCMs grew from 69,000 to 82,000 between 1971 and 1991, an increase of 17 %, or slightly higher than the 14 % recorded for all of Québec during the same period. This demographic growth rate was not the same for all RCMs, however. While Collines-de-l'Outaouais saw its population double, Papineau recorded only a slight increase, and Vallée-de-la-Gatineau and Pontiac suffered a small decrease. Its proximity and easy access to CUO territory is turning Collines-de-l'Outaouais into an outlying suburb of that urban community.

According to MTQ estimates for the year 2011, Collines-de-l'Outaouais will still be recording major population gains, while the other RCMs will see a stabilization, or even a decrease in their populations.

This strong demographic growth forecast for Collines-de-l'Outaouais could produce an increase in traffic on the highways connecting it to the CUO. In the other RCMs, the increase should be less pronounced.

Population growth in the Outaouais RCMs from 1971-1991



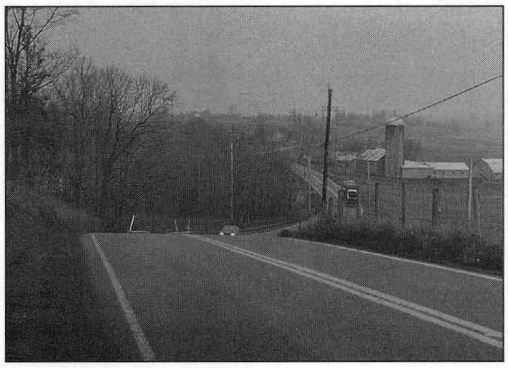
Source : Statistics Canada, 1971, 1981 and 1991 census.

- *Most highway roadways and structures are in acceptable condition*

In general, most of the MTQ-owned roadways and structures in the RCMs are in acceptable condition. Available MTQ data indicate that 61 % of the system is in good condition, 31 % in average condition and 3 % in poor condition. Roadways in poor condition are on roads where the traffic is very light.

- *Highway geometry restricts traffic flow on national and regional roads*

Traffic is relatively light on RCM highways, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand vehicles a day. Generally speaking, the traffic problems observed are not due to flows exceeding road capacity, but rather to the geometry of the roadways themselves (curves and steep hills). For example, highway 148, the sole direct link between the Outaouais and Montréal, does not provide convenient through-traffic service, and thus national highway service, mainly because of the number of villages it passes through. Shortcomings in the geometry of the highway system also restrict traffic flow and safety, particularly on highways 105, 117 and 309, which are also major truck routes.



• *Extension of autoroute 50 to Montréal: a regional priority*

Since 1967, the Conseil économique régional de l'Ouest du Québec Inc. has been recommending the construction of an autoroute linking Hull to Montréal. The initial studies on the alignment of autoroute 50 were undertaken by the MTQ in 1972 and the first section, the by-pass south of Lachute, was constructed in 1977. A second section between Hull and Masson-Angers was completed in 1983, and a third section linking Mirabel to Lachute was started in 1993.

The extension of autoroute 50 from Masson-Angers to Lachute is a priority for people living in the Outaouais. An autoroute linking the region to Montréal has become a essential for regional economic diversification. In addition to being supported by every regional municipal body,[1] this project is considered a priority in the CUO and Papineau RCM development plans and in the strategic planning at the Conseil régional de développement de l'Outaouais (CRDO).

To date, the MTQ has completed the opportunity and preliminary studies, and initiated the expropriation of several sections. In fall 1992, the MTQ submitted an environmental impact study for the sections between Masson-Angers and Lachute to the Ministère de l'Environnement. At the end of 1993, the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Faune (MENVF) presented the MTQ with a list of questions regarding the project. Once these questions have been answered to the satisfaction of MENVF, the project will be referred to the agency for public hearings on the environment, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (the BAPE). Public hearings will then be held if applications for such hearings are made.

1. *Déclaration 1993 des dirigeants des instances municipales régionales de l'Outaouais, 27 avril 1993.*
(1993 declaration of the Outaouais regional municipal authorities, April 27, 1993.)

• *A gap in the autoroute 5 corridor*

The north-south axis formed by autoroute 5 and highway 105 in Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCM presents problems that the MTQ is attempting to correct in various ways. The saturation of certain sections and the road geometry in many places along highway 105 have led the MTQ over the last few years to extend autoroute 5 to chemin de la Rivière in the municipality of Chelsea and to build the by-pass around Wakefield in the municipality of La Pêche. There remains, however, an 8.6 kilometre gap between autoroute 5 and the Wakefield by-pass. Consequently, traffic must use highway 105, a two-lane highway with steep gradients and poor passing visibility.

• *Major projects on the drawing board, but limited financial resources available*

Several highway projects are being studied by the MTQ based on the numerous requests coming from the area. The two largest of these projects involve the extension of autoroute 50 from Masson-Angers to Lachute and the extension of autoroute 5 to the municipality of Low. Construction costs are on the order of $180 million for autoroute 50 (for the Outaouais section only) and $45 million for autoroute 5. The total value of these projects alone, not counting the numerous other requests made, greatly exceeds MTQ resources available for the region.

• *Highway corridors are losing their intended function*

The proliferation of private driveways and intersections on the MTQ highways is impeding traffic flow and adding to the safety problems for those who use or who live along the highways. Several sections of the highway system, particularly national highways 148 and 105, and most regional roads have this problem. The MTQ has formed a task force of RCM and CUO urban and regional planners to determine possible ways of solving these problems.

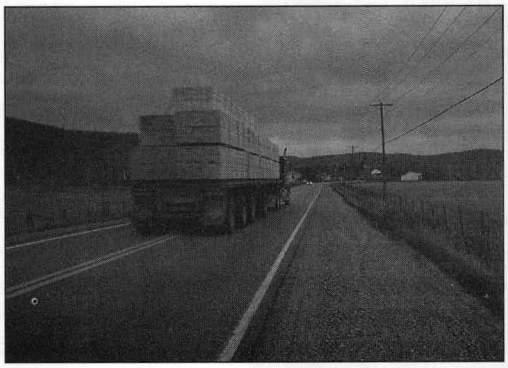
- *Lack of knowledge about accident concentration sites*

Although a variety of safety studies have been done and corrective measures taken at certain accident concentration sites, specific knowledge about such sites must be obtained in the Outaouais region.

- *Truck traffic predominates*

The closing of several railway lines and branch lines, coupled with the discontinuation of timber-floating on all rivers means that truck transport is almost the only means of transporting goods.

The percentage of trucks on the highways is around 10 % but may sometimes exceed 20 %. Although this percentage of trucks may be relatively high, the actual number of vehicles is generally quite low, not more than 400 in each direction daily.



Most truck traffic in the RCMs is intraregional. There is little in-transit traffic between the Outaouais and the Montréal region. In fact, of the more than 800 trucks travelling daily on autoroute 40-417 on the provincial border, only 80 are coming from or going to the Outaouais. On highway 148 near Lachute, the daily flow is even lower at around 65 trucks in each direction.

Elsewhere, a study conducted by the MTQ with the principal manufacturing employers in the region showed that although the rail line between Hull and Montréal is little used, it is essential for transporting certain hazardous materials and large quantities of products over long distances. Regional interests plan on using this train line from Hull to Montebello to run tourist train excursions. However, Canadian Pacific recently sought approval from the National Transportation Agency (NTA) to abandon a section of this line between Thurso and Saint-Augustin, in the Mirabel area.

- *A bicycle path linking Hull, Montréal and Québec City*

The highway 148 corridor is a scenic tourist route along the Ottawa River. However, as currently developed, it is not suited for bicycle traffic. Regional representatives are proposing the construction of a safe bicycle path linking Hull, Montréal and Québec City which would follow the north shore of the Ottawa River, thus connecting the various tourist destinations in the region.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED ORIENTATIONS ?

The broad MTQ transportation orientations and the elements of the existing and foreseeable transportation situation for the Outaouais have resulted in the following orientations and objectives :

Orientation 1 :

Maintain the major highways in good condition ; this should take priority over all other MTQ interventions.

Objective :

— Ensure the availability of the budget required to maintain the national system in good condition.

Orientation 2:

Improve the effectiveness and safety of the national highway system

Objectives:

— As a priority, improve the geometry of national and regional highways 105, 117 and 309, which are proposed as truck routes.
— In conjunction with the region, identify ways to preserve the intended function of highway corridors and incorporate them in the activities of the MTQ and RCM development plans, and in municipal urban development plans.
— Learn more about frequent-accident sites within the RCMs, by obtaining the technical tools necessary for diagnosis of road safety in the entire region.
— Intervene more systematically on the frequent-accident sites identified in this diagnosis.

Orientation 3:

Improve travelling conditions between the Outaouais and the neighbouring regions

— improve travelling conditions between the Outaouais and the Montréal region
— improve travelling conditions to the Abitibi and the Laurentians

Orientation 4:

Support the effective transportation of goods

Objectives

— Ensure improved management of truck travel on the highway system by identifying truck routes that the MTQ would subsequently make a priority for improvements, repair and maintenance.
— Ensure coordination of truck routing between the MTQ and municipal systems.
— Insofar as the sections concerned can be economically viable, make the necessary representations to the federal government to have the existing rail system maintained.
— If justified by the demand and an interested local promoter, support the creation of a local railway on the CP Rail line.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THESE ORIENTATIONS?

Between now and the year 2011, the following means can be used to implement these orientations:

MAINTENANCE OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The MTQ currently spends a little over $6 million a year to maintain the roadways of the highway system in the Outaouais. The amount for the RCMs is around $5 million a year.

Studies carried out by the MTQ indicate that maintaining the highway system would require over the next few years an annual amount equivalent to that spent on maintenance in the past.

INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS AND SAFETY OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The MTQ foresees a variety of interventions to increase the efficiency and safety of the regional highway system.

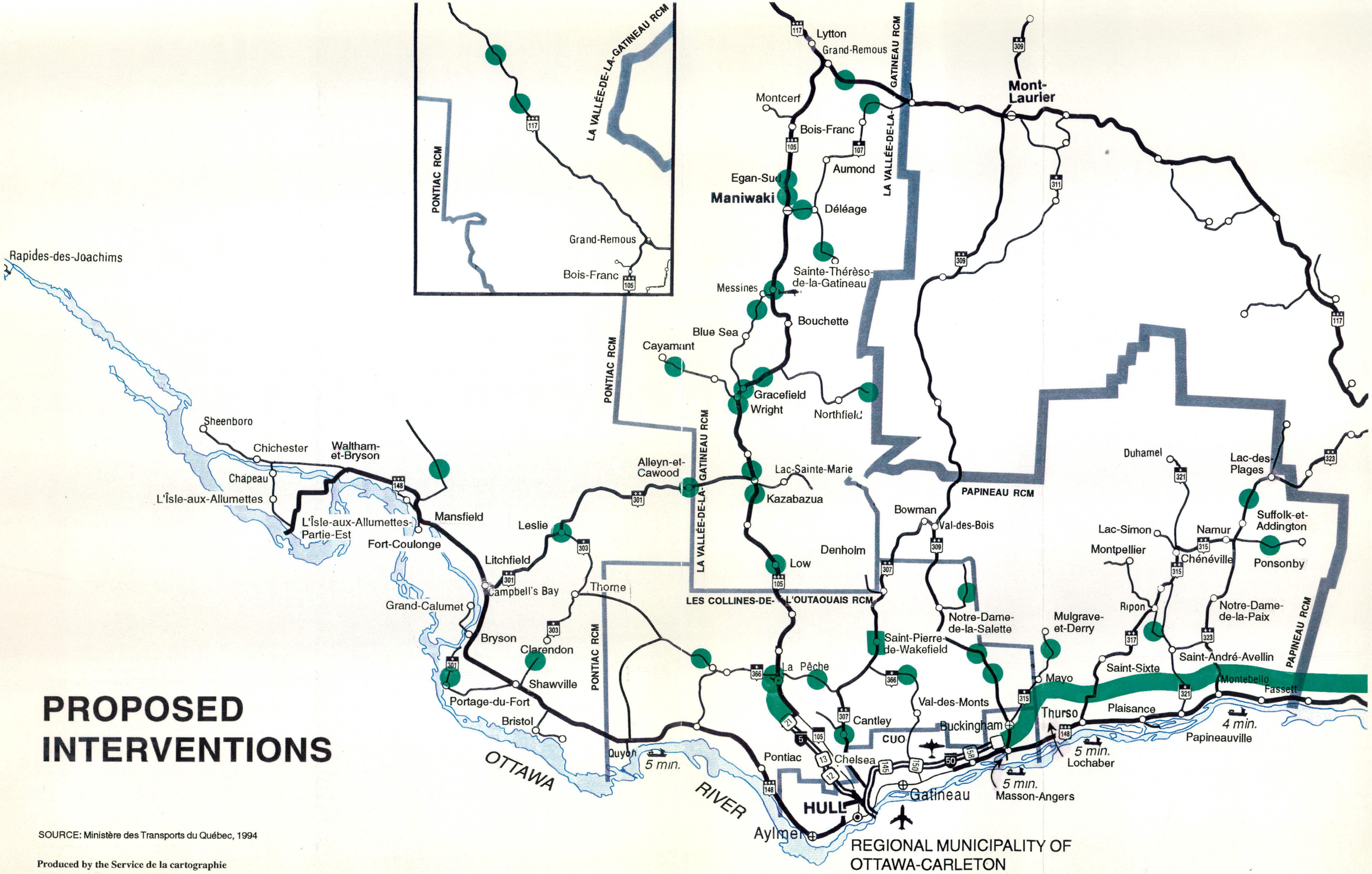
• *Improvement of the highway system*

A variety of work would be performed to improve the geometry of several highways in the RCMs that are under MTQ jurisdiction (see map).

As part of such work, priority would be given to highways identified as in-transit truck routes, i.e. highways 105, 117 and 309. Other than resurfacing work, the MTQ would not undertake major improvements on highway 148, given the environmental constraints involved in any widening of the roadway (expropriation of a large number of residences).

Thus, the major improvement work would be done on highways 105, 117 and 309.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS



SOURCE: Ministère des Transports du Québec, 1994

Produced by the Service de la cartographie

A number of steps have already been taken to correct the geometric deficiencies of highway 105. Further improvements are planned between Low and Grand-Remous to correct the contours and curves, add passing lanes, upgrade intersections, etc.

Major improvements on highway 117 have been under way for several years and would continue until its technical characteristics are commensurate with its function as a national highway. Three sections covering a total distance of 34 kilometres would be rebuilt.

On highway 309, a major truck route, additional lanes for slow traffic would be constructed and curves corrected. This would improve traffic conditions between Buckingham and Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette.

The projects involving highways 105, 117 and 309 would contribute to improving road conditions between the Outaouais and the neighbouring regions.

Several repair and improvement projects would also be carried out on regional and collector roads.

- *Management of highway corridors*

The MTQ has already undertaken management of highway corridors with the RCMs and municipalities, and intends to continue this activity. In doing so, preventive and corrective measures can be identified to preserve and improve traffic and safety conditions on the national highway system. Possible interventions include regional and urban planning measures and various actions and work aimed at limiting the number of private driveways and intersections on the MTQ highway system.

- *Information on accident concentration sites and suitable intervention*

Improved knowledge on locations having a concentration of accidents will be obtained from a region-wide diagnosis of road safety. Based on these findings, the MTQ will identify the action required at the worst sites, using funding available under the frequent-accident sites program.

- *Paving of the shoulders on highway 148*

Henceforth, the MTQ will pave the shoulders on highway 148 in Papineau RCM when it resurfaces the roadway. Asphalting the shoulders will facilitate maintenance and help increase safety for cyclists, who will have a paved surface outside the traffic lanes.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Based on the transportation orientations established by the MTQ for the Outaouais, the largest highway system development projects would involve upgrading road conditions between this region and the rest of Québec: the extension of autoroute 5 to the north, and of autoroute 50 to the east. Study of traffic conditions in these corridors makes it possible to specify the needs for these infrastructures and identify future MTQ interventions regarding these projects.

Autoroute 5

In the autoroute 5 and highway 105 corridor, traffic conditions should remain satisfactory for many years. In fact, on the 8.6 kilometre section of highway 105 linking Chemin de la Rivière to the Wakefield by-pass, traffic numbers around 10,000 vehicles a day, which indicates that the capacity of this highway has not been reached. Assuming a growth in traffic of 2 % a year, the capacity of this highway will be sufficient for another 15 years or so, after which intervention would be required. The MTQ will conduct periodic studies of the growth in traffic on this section of highway 105 so that it can intervene at the opportune time.

Further north, between the Wakefield by-pass and the municipality of Low, traffic on highway 105 ranges between 3,000 and 5,000 vehicles a day. Such low volumes indicate that the capacity of highway 105 is unlikely to be reached in the near future. Extending autoroute 5 between Wakefield and Low therefore seems inappropriate before 2011. However, various individual projects and the connection of the Wakefield by-pass lane to highway 105 would improve conditions along this section.

Autoroute 50

The section of highway 148 in the Papineau RCM is not suited for long-distance travel and, therefore, for a national highway, mainly because of the numerous villages it crosses. Outside these areas, highway 148 is currently not used to its full capacity. Based on forecast increases in traffic, certain sections of this highway will reach their capacity around 2011.

In this context, it seems timely for the MTQ to undertake the necessary studies and steps to obtain the government approvals required to implement the autoroute 50 project.

However, implementation costs for the autoroute 5 and 50 projects total almost $225 million, with an additional $130 million to construct the section of autoroute 50 between the Outaouais and Mirabel. These costs greatly exceed the available funding for highway development projects in the Outaouais RCMs.

Highway 307

The MTQ should also be building a bypass around the village of Saint-Pierre-de-Wakefield, which is crossed by highway 307. This highway is very narrow and carries heavy traffic during the summer. It is also used by a large number of trucks.

MORE EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS

- *Identification of transport routes and review of the policy on heavy-vehicle traffic*

The MTQ has developed a transport routing plan for in-transit vehicles and has recently revised its policy on heavy-vehicle traffic. During 1994, this plan and policy will be presented for comments to all municipalities and RCMs involved and to the carriers. After this consultation, the transport routing plan will be revised to reflect the regional context and the wishes of those involved, and to coordinate the MTQ system with those of the municipalities. The transport routing plan and the policy on heavy vehicles will permit improved municipal management.

- *Maintenance of the rail line between Thurso and Saint-Augustin*

Insofar as the section involved can be economically viable, the MTQ will make the necessary representations to the National Transportation Agency (NTA) to seek the maintenance of the rail line between Thurso and Saint-Augustin.

In the event that the NTA decides to approve the closing of this line, the MTQ is prepared to study the possibility of providing technical and financial support for a feasibility study on the establishment of a local railway for the transport of goods. Such support would depend on sufficient demand for a local rail line and an interested promoter.

HOW YOU CAN EXPRESS YOUR OPINION

You can express your views on transportation in the Outaouais in one of the following ways:

- You can write a brief stating your opinions and forward it to
  Ministère des Transports du Québec
  c/o Mr. Denis Carrier
  170 Hôtel-de-Ville, 5th Floor
  Hull, Québec
  J8X 4C2

  Telephone: (819) 772-3107
  Fax: (819) 772-3107
- When submitting your brief, please indicate whether you wish to present this brief at one of the consultation evenings planned in the four RCMs.
- If you do not send your brief prior to the consultation evenings, you may table it at the beginning of one of the four sessions and ask to present it.
- You may also speak after the presentation of briefs at the public consultation meetings planned in the four RCMs: Papineau, Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, Collines-de-l'Outaouais and Pontiac.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The principal documents produced as part of the Outaouais (Region 07) transportation plan may be consulted at the MTQ service centres shown below:

170 rue Hôtel-de-Ville, 5th Floor
Hull, Québec
J8X 4C2
(819) 772-3107

208 Henri-Bourassa
Papineauville, Québec
J0V 1R0
(819) 427-6238

157 rue Principale Nord
Maniwaki, Québec
J9E 2G7
(819) 449-5421

33 rue Jean-Proulx
Hull, Québec
J8Z 1X1
(819) 772-3339

Highway 148
Campbell's Bay, Québec
J0X 1K0
(819) 648-5977

The documents available for consultation are the following:

— *Problématique, orientations et objectifs, 1994*
(Problems, orientations and objectives, 1994)
— *Rapport sur la consultation des spécialistes du 7 octobre 1993, 1994*
(Report on specialists consultation on October 7, 1993, 1994)
— *Scénarios d'intervention, 1994*
(Intervention scenarios, 1994)

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