



September 9, 2015

Western Ontario Wardens  
Single-Tier Mayors of Southwestern Ontario  
Chairs of SWEA, SCOR, SWOTA and TAO

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Wardens, Mayors and Chairs:

On behalf of the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC), I am pleased to provide you a copy of the WOWC's submission to the Government of Ontario's **Moving Ontario Forward** consultation process.

During the Premier's visit to Southwestern Ontario in June 2015, we heard a suggestion that Southwestern Ontario must provide a clear indication of its needs and expectations. Since that June meeting we sought input from, and consulted with, WOWC member municipalities, the nine single-tier municipalities of Southwestern Ontario, the South West Economic Alliance (SWEA), the South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Alliance (SCOR), the Southwestern Ontario Transportation Alliance (SWOTA), and Transport Action Ontario (TAO) to develop a Southwestern Ontario strategic infrastructure investment submission for the **Moving Ontario Forward** consultation process.

In our submission, the WOWC advised Premier Wynne, that as a region representing 39% of the Ontario population and employment outside of the GTHA, Southwestern Ontario expects to receive \$5.84 Billion of the total \$15 Billion, 10 year **Moving Ontario Forward** strategic infrastructure investment program. Our submission illustrates the opportunities for all three levels of government to partner in strategic infrastructure investment across Southwestern Ontario. Implemented wisely, we strongly believe these investments will transform Southwestern Ontario's economy, vibrancy and quality of life for all.

In follow up to Premier Wynne's stated desire to return to Southwestern Ontario to discuss our vision, we have asked for such an opportunity for further discussion with the Premier and key Ministers about our submission.

The WOWC respectfully requests that that our submission be presented to your Council/Board for endorsement at the earliest opportunity and that you forward your supporting resolution to Premier Wynne, Minister Duguid and to the WOWC (c/o Peter Crockett, County of Oxford [pcrockett@oxfordcounty.ca](mailto:pcrockett@oxfordcounty.ca)).

Sincerely,

Randy Hope  
Chair Western Ontario Warden's Caucus and Mayor of Chatham-Kent  
Encl.

Cc: WOWC CAO's, Single-Tier CAO's of Southwestern Ontario, Art Lawson, Ken Westcar, Don McKay, Harry Joosten, Charlotte Gravlev, Don Shropshire, Peter Crockett

**Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus**

315 King St. W., P.O. Box 640, Chatham, ON – N7M 5K8  
T: 519-360-1998 F: 519-436-3236 TF: 1-800-714-7497

# Moving Ontario Forward Consultation

## Infrastructure Needs – The Southwestern Ontario Perspective

### Key Points

- This briefing note was prepared by the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC) in response to Premier Wynne's June 2015 discussion with Southwestern Ontario political leaders and the **Moving Ontario Forward** consultation process. All WOWC member councils have been asked to endorse this document through council resolution by September 30, 2015.
- Preparation of this briefing note included direct input from the single-tier municipalities of Southwestern Ontario (Attachment 1), South Central Ontario Region (SCOR), the Southwestern Ontario Transportation Alliance (SWOTA) and Transport Action Ontario (TAO). All of these partners, along with the Southwest Economic Alliance (SWEA), have similarly been asked to endorse this document by September 30, 2015.
- The **Moving Ontario Forward** program represents an opportunity to address infrastructure needs while strategically investing in Southwestern Ontario's economic vitality and ongoing economic transformation, which will strengthen all of Ontario for years to come. This Briefing Note is intended to provide a strategic overview of the **expectations** of Southwestern Ontario. It is *not* intended to be a definitive project or issue list of regional or local needs.
- Southwestern Ontario comprises approximately 39% of the population and employment in Ontario, outside of the GTHA. The WOWC and its partners therefore expect the government of Ontario to allocate 39% of the total \$15 billion **Moving Ontario Forward** infrastructure investment program, or **\$5.84 billion**, to Southwestern Ontario during the 2015–2025 period.
- Strategic infrastructure investment opportunities exist across Southwestern Ontario. Such investments will be a catalyst for economic growth and quality of life improvements, which, in turn, will support future infrastructure investment partnership opportunities.
- Key infrastructure strategic investment opportunities include the following:
  - South West Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) network proposal
  - Municipal arterial (major) roads and bridges
  - Provincial highways, interchanges and bridges
  - Mass transportation: Network Southwest proposal (integrated passenger rail/motor coach system), urban transit and existing Go Transit service areas
  - Social housing infrastructure
  - Community infrastructure
- Significant investment in all of these areas must be a strategic piece of the **Moving Ontario Forward** plan for Southwestern Ontario if it is to ensure the vitality, growth and well-being of the region's residents, businesses and economy.

- Federal, provincial and municipal governments must all share responsibility for the necessary investments and work in partnership. As such, all the investment opportunities identified in this document will require key partnerships and funding participation from all three levels of government.

## Background

### SWIFT Network Proposal (Attachment 2)

The WOWC's proposed SWIFT Network is an ultra-high-speed fibre optic regional broadband network for everyone in South Western Ontario.

- The SWIFT Operating Plan provides a direct investment of \$270 million in the first five years, \$500 million by Year 12 and \$1 billion by 2035. The initial five-year build will deliver the following:
  - 3,000 km of fibre infrastructure
  - GDP increases up to \$1 billion
  - 50,000 new jobs within the first 12 years, and 100,000 by 2040
- Of the initial \$270 million, **\$178 million** provincial/federal shared investment is necessary. This investment will provide equitable and affordable access to ultra-high-speed broadband across Southwestern Ontario, regardless of population density.
- This economic initiative is vital to reversing several successive years of economic decline. The implementation of the plan will provide all in Southwestern Ontario with sufficient broadband access to develop significant long-term improvements in healthcare, education and government services as well as the general marketplace. A growing number of organizations and businesses across Southwestern Ontario support the SWIFT plan.

### Strategic Transportation Infrastructure (Attachment 3)

If strategically integrated, provincial highways and other major roads plus mass transportation and the rail freight systems across Southwestern Ontario will deliver true community connectivity and economic vitality.

#### Major Municipal Roads and Bridges

- We estimate a **\$2 billion** deficit for investment in this infrastructure over the next 10 years. While asset management plans and financial strategies exist, addressing the growing deficits will require significant federal and provincial support.

#### Provincial Highway infrastructure

- The 400-series and the secondary system of highways, interchanges and bridges require ongoing maintenance, replacements, and upgrades to address infrastructure deficits and safety issues. For example, the Highway 401/403 interchange is still incomplete, without full directional movements.

## Mass Transportation

The efficient movement of people, goods and services across Southwestern Ontario requires a **\$2 billion** strategic investment to create a fully integrated system of higher frequency passenger rail services, the strategic separation of passenger and freight rail, an inter-community bus system and expanded urban transit systems.

- Network Southwest (Attachment 4) is the proposed 2020 phase to revitalize mass transportation across Southwestern Ontario. This **\$400 million** plan proposes incremental enhancements to passenger rail and integration with an inter-community bus feeder system. The proposal, modelled after the successful US approach, is supported by WOWC, SCOR, SWEA and a number of municipalities across Southwestern Ontario. The inter-community motor coach system serves the dual purpose of a critical feeder service to the Via Rail system and will offer much improved community mobility and connectivity across Southwestern Ontario.
- Implementation and achievement of significantly increased ridership will require the following:
  - Strategic investment
  - Substantive legislative and regulatory reform
  - A fresh innovative approach
  - Strong partner relationships with all levels of government and the motor coach industry
- The Network Southwest proposal also looks ahead to further enhancements beyond 2025. These are the next logical steps to a fully integrated system across Southwestern Ontario that supports a longer-term view that includes a high-speed rail (HSR) corridor across Southwestern Ontario.
- Go Transit (rail and/or bus) requires ongoing capacity and service frequency improvements. The focus should be on Go Transit improvements within existing areas served as well as communities such as Brantford, which are not directly served but are surrounded by Go Transit services.
- Municipal transit services in larger urban centres also require significant investment. The priority for higher-order urban transit systems (e.g. London's Shift Plan) is of particular value when such an investment not only addresses urban centre transit needs but also supports broader Southwestern Ontario transit needs through its proper integration with a VIA/Motor Coach system, as envisioned in Network Southwest.
- Freight rail is a vital component of goods movement that must be fully integrated within the broader transportation system. To achieve higher rail corridor capacity that balances freight and passenger demands we will need strategic track by-passes, grade separation, and rail vehicle control systems. These investments will improve safety while allowing for reduced headways, greater speed variations between freight and passenger rail and higher overall speeds for passenger rail. In addition, Southwestern Ontario's location relative to major US border crossings and the potential strategic value of a federal/provincial investment in an inter-modal rail facility near Highway 401 between the Highway 402 and the Highway 403 interchanges should be considered.

## Social Housing

- There are over 38,000 social housing units operating across Southwestern Ontario, with over 50% being municipally owned and operated. Almost all of the remaining units are provided through not-for-profit organizations funded through municipal agreements that are approaching maturity or expiry. Municipalities are legally obliged to sustain at least this social housing unit baseline as established with the 2000 download. We estimate the social housing infrastructure funding deficit across Southwestern Ontario to be in excess of **\$2 billion** over the next ten years.
- The waitlist for additional social housing exceeds 8,300 units across Southwestern Ontario and continues to grow. Strategic social housing investment should both curb demand and expand to eliminate this gap. Meeting core housing demand contributes to the overall health and well-being of all our communities and citizens, whether they use social housing or not.

## Community Infrastructure

Across Southwestern Ontario, large and small urban and rural communities struggle to address priority community infrastructure deficits and financial pressures. Continued provincial investment in the renewal and enhancement of this infrastructure is vital.

## Summary

Southwestern Ontario expects a **\$5.84 billion** share of the proposed total \$15 billion **Moving Ontario Forward** program of strategic infrastructure investment, outside of the GTHA area. This briefing note identifies opportunities for strategic infrastructure investment that can transform the quality of life and economic vitality of Southwestern Ontario.

Prepared by Western Ontario Warden's Caucus

## ATTACHMENTS

**Attachment 1 – SW Ontario Population and Employment**

**Attachment 2 – The SWIFT Network, Project Overview**

**Attachment 3 – SW Ontario Strategic Transportation Infrastructure**

**Attachment 4 – Network Southwest Summary**

## **Attachment 1 – Southwestern Ontario Population and Employment**

2011 Census Division*	Governance Model	Population	Employment
Simcoe	Two-tier & Single-tier (2)	446,063	218,515
Dufferin	Two-tier	56,881	29,665
Grey	Two-tier	92,568	44,535
Wellington	Two-tier & Single-tier	208,360	110,315
Bruce	Two-tier	66,102	31,775
Huron	Two-tier	59,100	29,740
Perth	Two-tier & Single-tier (2)	75,112	40,125
Brant	Single-tier (2)	136,035	66,640
Norfolk	Single-tier	63,175	29,005
Elgin	Two-tier & Single-tier	87,461	40,470
Middlesex	Two-tier & Single-tier	439,151	215,495
Lambton	Two-tier	126,199	56,240
Chatham-Kent	Single-tier	103,671	45,690
Essex	Two-tier & Single-tier	388,782	168,380
Oxford	Regional, Two-tier	105,719	53,420
Southwestern Ontario		2,454,379	1,180,010

\* Includes separated/single tier municipalities of St. Thomas, London, Windsor, Brantford, St. Marys, Guelph, Barrie, Orillia, and Stratford

GTAH	4 Regions & 2 Single-tier	6,574,140	3,266,100
ONTARIO	Province	12,851,821	6,297,005

### **Southwest Ontario to Ontario (outside of GTAH)**

Population	39%
Employment	39%

## **Attachment 2 – The SWIFT Network, Project Overview**



### ***Purpose***

The Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) project is a forward-looking plan to help the region compete, connect and keep pace in a digital world.

### ***Overview***

- The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) created the SWIFT project to connect the region to ultra-high-speed broadband and prepare for ever-growing demand for connectivity.
  - Rural and small urban areas are underserved because customers are too few and far between for internet service providers (ISPs) to justify investing in new fibre networks. Low-income urban communities can also be underserved.
- SWIFT aims to create an extensive fibre network that connects the entire region with 1G service, using a combination of public and private funding.
  - SWIFT's role is to direct public funding to address the gaps in broadband infrastructure that are leaving some communities behind, because the market cannot meet everyone's needs alone.
  - There are both urban and rural communities that require support to access robust broadband services.
  - By building on existing fibre to create a far-reaching regional fibre network that is closer to customers, SWIFT will make it easier for ISPs to connect homes and businesses to ultra-high-speed internet.
  - The public funding will trigger private investment from ISPs, who will continue to own and operate their networks and deliver services directly to customers.
  - All ISPs will have equal access to the fibre network, leveling the playing field and creating a more competitive marketplace that will better serve urban and rural communities.
  - SWIFT will work closely with ISPs to identify the gaps in existing fibre networks and then structure the project to fill those gaps. We want to leverage as much of the existing fibre across the region as we can.
- By focusing on ultra-high-speed services, rather than funding local internet access in the short-term, with lesser speeds and reliability, SWIFT is forward-looking and future-proof.

***SWIFT Business Model***

- The total cost of the project is estimated at \$287 million. The federal and provincial governments are being asked to contribute about \$189 million, the municipal sector, \$18 million and private sector investment is expected to be \$80 million.
- Once the network is built, a dedicated ongoing service fee will be reinvested into expanding fibre connectivity to everyone.
- As more people in the region sign up for services, more funds will be available to further build and enhance the network.
- This self-funding model will help the region keep pace with ever-changing demand and needs.
- SWIFT's initial fibre build will include connecting more than 2,000 public sites, such as municipal buildings, public and post-secondary education sites and hospitals.
- The network will be built to grow with increased demand for broadband services.
- An external, third-party review by Dr. Reza Rajabiun, a Ryerson University researcher with national expertise in broadband infrastructure and competition policy, has endorsed SWIFT's approach to building and funding the network.
  - His review states that "SWIFT offers an innovative, realistic and strong business model."
  - Dr. Rajabiun's detailed analysis included review of the financial data used by BDO Canada, a leading accounting consultancy that developed the SWIFT business plan.

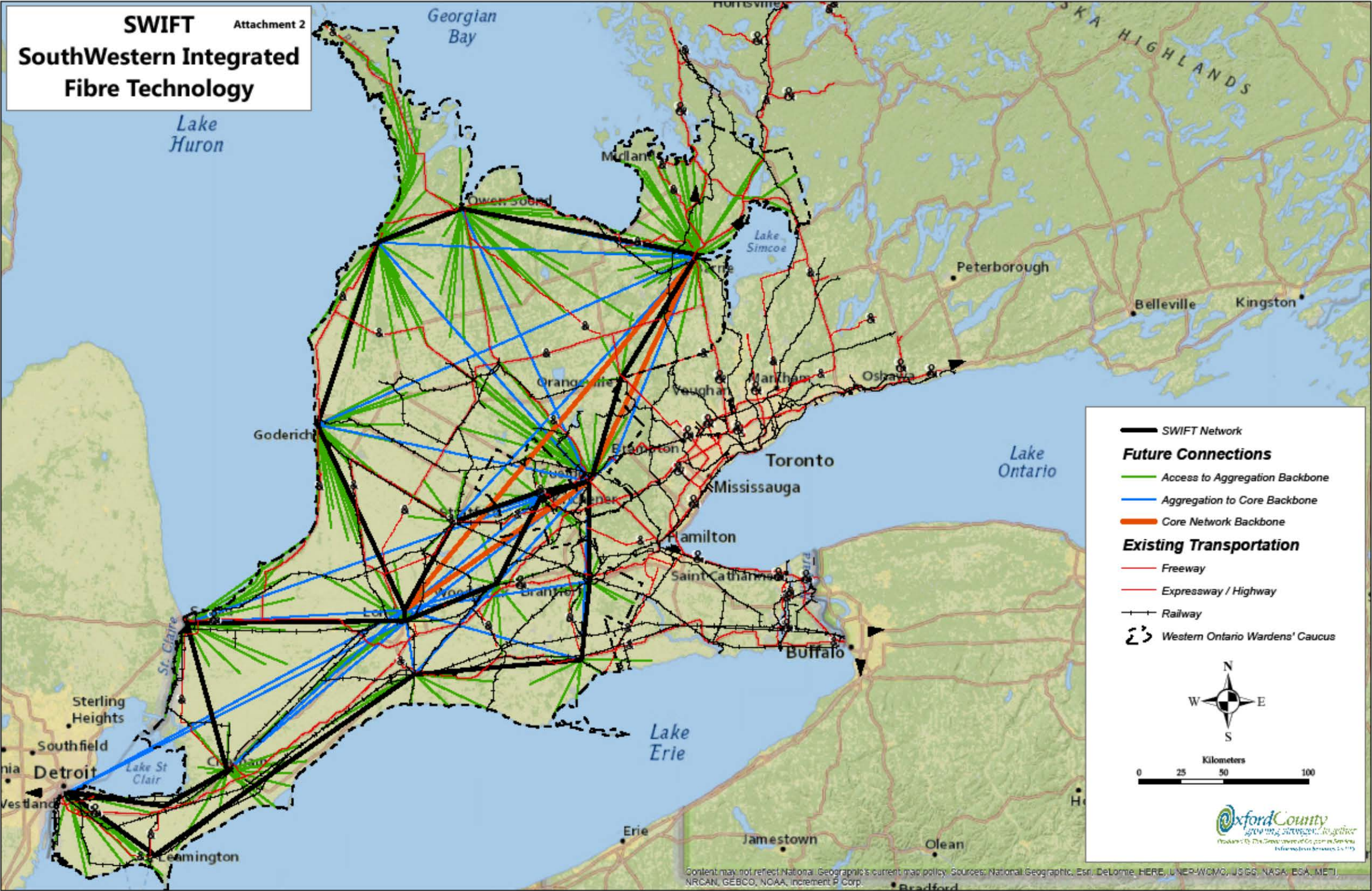
***Why SWIFT is needed?***

- People, businesses and governments all rely on the internet to connect, conduct business and to provide or access services.
  - The internet is constantly evolving and changing – and requiring more and more speed, bandwidth and reliability.
  - Open data applications and 'smart' systems that connect people, places and things mean that demand for high-speed internet is growing faster than ever imagined.
- Communities in southwestern Ontario are retooling their economies in light of the many challenges facing our traditional foundations in manufacturing and farming.
  - In today's economy, all industries and sectors rely on broadband to succeed.
  - Broadband access supports education, distance learning and re-training programs that will help southwestern Ontarians to succeed and the region to thrive.
- We need to retain our young people and stem the migration to urban centres. Increasingly, young people make these decisions based on access to internet.
- Improved broadband makes public services easier to access and more efficient. This helps rural communities with long distances and low population densities, while also reducing pressure on services in urban communities.



***Who is involved?***

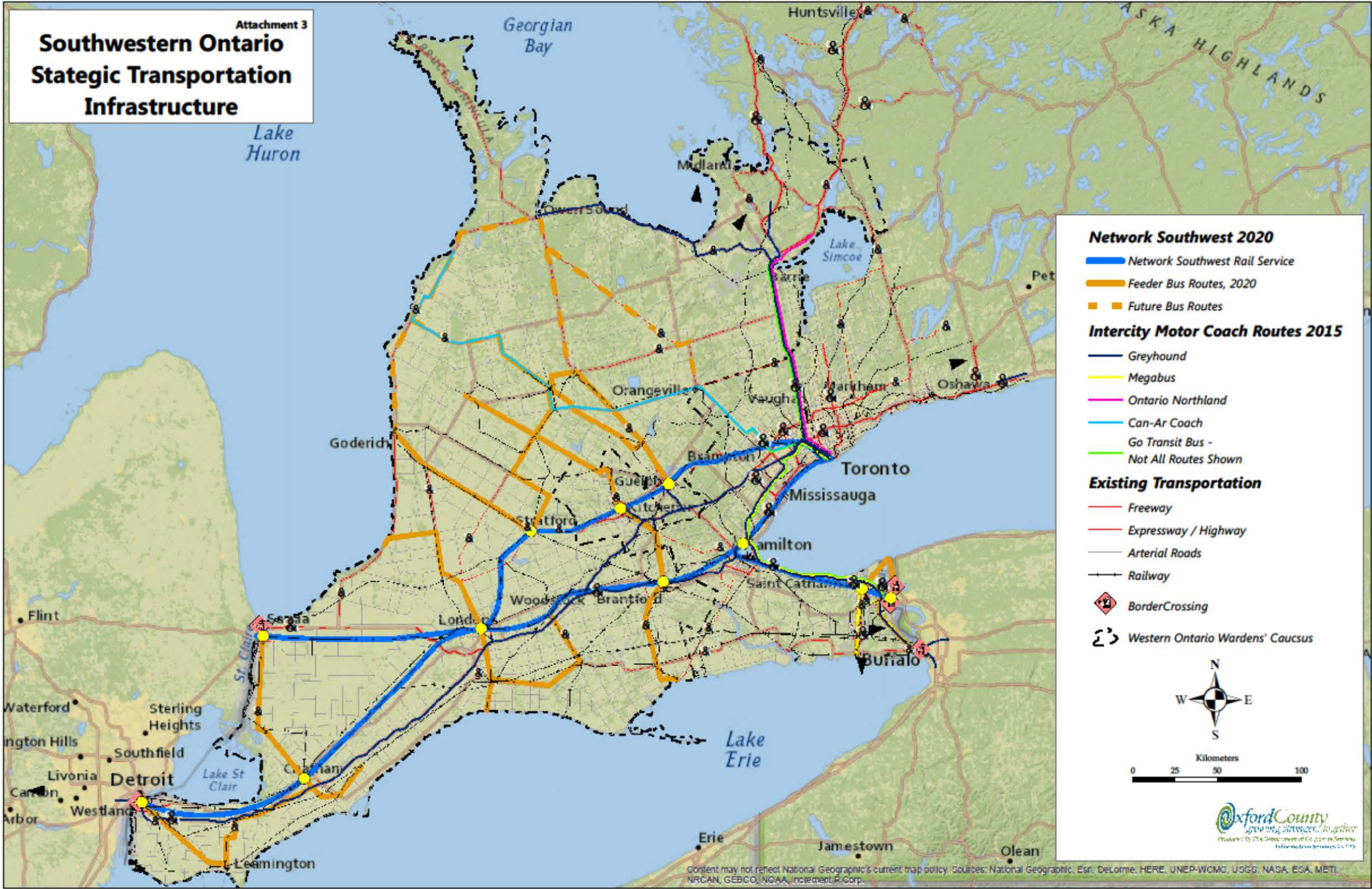
- SWIFT was created by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, which represents 15 upper and single-tier municipalities in southwestern Ontario, with more than three million residents.
  - In addition to members of the WOWC, the Region of Niagara and City of Orillia are financial contributors, as are Georgian College and Grey Bruce Health Services. Support from other separated cities, education and health care institutions across the region are being sought.
- SWIFT is also seeking to work closely with First Nations communities in southwestern Ontario to make sure that they benefit from the project.
- SWIFT is appealing to the federal and provincial governments for their support to improve broadband access across southwestern Ontario.



*This page intentionally left blank*



Attachment 3 – Southwestern Ontario Strategic Transportation Infrastructure





## Attachment 4 – Network Southwest

(<http://www.swota.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Network-Southwest-Report.pdf>)

# Network Southwest

## Passenger Rail and Bus Service Action Plan

A grassroots response to Southwestern Ontario's widening mobility gap

*Network Southwest* is citizen-driven. The VIA Rail cuts in Southwestern Ontario in 2012 were a wake-up call to citizens in Sarnia, Stratford, St. Marys, Chatham, and Toronto. Intercity bus routes have also been decimated, leaving many communities with much reduced public transportation or none at all. In November 2013, the Southwest Economic Alliance, an organization created by municipal governments, held a transportation summit in London. The formation of the Southwestern Ontario Transportation Alliance stems from these initiatives. Funding for the *Network Southwest* research project and a series of public forums has come from local businesses and individual donations. Public forums to present the vision commenced in Sarnia in January.

Based on existing technology and proven models from competitive regions

*Network Southwest* is a plan drawing on best practices from the most successful models of regional high performance rail and integrated feeder bus networks from around the United States and other jurisdictions that compete with Ontario for investment and jobs. The key to success for other regions has been strong cooperation between all levels of government, and taking a systems approach to entire regional networks. *Network Southwest* will provide more frequent service with new equipment on our three existing rail lines to Sarnia, Windsor, and Niagara Falls, forming the backbone of a comprehensive regional network with connecting bus routes serving communities from Fort Erie, to Kingsville, to Owen Sound. Upgraded stations will provide local economic hubs and coordinated schedules will facilitate easy connections between services.

Practical at a modest cost and with rapid results

Using the existing rail and highway systems and building upon previous infrastructure investments, *Network Southwest* can be implemented over a five-year period with incremental improvements each year. The proposed investment of \$400 million will yield at least \$1.2 billion in economic stimulus. Ten new bi-level push-pull trains, built with Ontario content, will significantly reduce operating costs. Cooperation between governments will remove duplication of effort. Integrated ticketing, improved frequencies, and common branding will drive revenue. New routes will be phased in as ridership grows. Like all other forms of transport, *Network Southwest* will continue to require operating grants from senior levels of government, but greater efficiency will allow existing grants to stretch to provide a balanced transportation network that offers the connectivity businesses and communities need to thrive, and to serving more passengers across the region.

Get on board

Join us in building public support for *Network Southwest*. Stay informed through our website at [www.swota.ca](http://www.swota.ca) or better yet, invite us to present to your community or organization. Tell your local councillor, MP, and MPP about the concept and why our communities need them to work together to deliver results.

