



Context

Nunavik is a vast, remote and wild territory. None of the 14 communities are connected to one another by road or railway, or to southern Québec. The cost of living and of doing business in the region is very high due mainly to the prohibitive cost of transportation by air and the short marine shipping season which imposes excessive additional warehousing and financing costs. Development of energy, mining and tourism potentials will proceed at the same pace as development of the region's transportation system.

A Few of the Challenges

Inuit depend on renewable resources, such as caribou, arctic char and waterfowl, for their traditional subsistence harvesting. Climate change, however, is having a significant impact on the capacity to safely access harvesting areas.

Parnasimautik covers three main components of the regional transportation sector: air, sea and land links.

Between 1984 and 1991, airports were built in all the communities except in Kuujuarapik and Kuujuaq where airport infrastructure existed already. Since then, while airlines have expanded considerably to meet the region's growing needs (increased population, health services, tourism and mineral exploration activities), airport infrastructure have not grown in the same way. In fact, the condition of this infrastructure is deteriorating due in particular to changes in the permafrost and overuse.

The costs incurred transporting goods and supplies to the region is a significant contributor to the high cost living. As well, current methods of transportation impose extensive warehousing and financing costs on businesses and organizations.

Currently, road development for industrial development is unregulated.

Enhancements to regional land, air and sea transportation networks will generate construction activity and user traffic. Impacts on the environment and subsistence harvesting activities will be unavoidable.

Solutions and Priorities

In 2008, the Kativik Regional Government, the Makivik Corporation, the Cree and non-Native communities of James Bay, and the ministère des Transports du Québec laid the groundwork for a multi-year transportation strategy for Northern Québec. The strategy's main goals are to optimize transportation safety, reduce the share of transportation costs in household expenses, support the regional economy, upgrade user mobility, and maximize regional spin-offs and sustainable solutions.

The region will likely continue to largely depend on air and marine transportation over the next 25 years.

