

Commission parlementaire des Transports et de l'Environnement

Audition sur le projet de Chemin de fer TransQuébec Express
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Représentation

De la Société MAKIVIK

« L'accès au territoire du Nunavik »

Makivik Corporation

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PLAN NUNAVIK

Access to territory

The development of the energy, mining, tourism and renewable resources potentials of Nunavik will very much depend on the development of the region's transportation system. Over the past 10 years, Quebec and Nunavik have implicated the main stakeholders of the region in the development of a transportation strategy that was released in February 2008. The objective of the strategy is to develop the access to the territory in order to improve the mobility of the people and of the goods, to reduce the cost of living and stimulate the regional and the local economy.

Since the adoption of the strategy a number of projects have been realized, the most important being the development of a jet access in Puvirnituk, on the Hudson's coast of Nunavik.

In establishing our priorities, we have considered the following characteristics that differentiate Nunavik of the other communities located North of the 49th parallel.

Nunavik's vastness, remoteness and isolation from the rest of Quebec;

High Costs of transportation for residents travelling by air and for the shipping of goods both by air and sea;

Limited marine infrastructures and a short navigational season between the end of June to the end of September that imposes additional warehousing and financing costs on businesses that must stock-up with goods for many months of the year;

Absence of a terrestrial access from Radisson to Kuujjuarapik and the Hudson's Bay communities and from Caniapiscau or Schefferville to Kuujjuaq and the Ungava communities;

High cost of living;

High cost of doing business;

Climate changes that have significant impacts on the communities both in terms of the vulnerability of their infrastructure and in terms of the region's residents capacity to maintain subsistence harvesting activities as a way of life.

Priorities of Nunavik

The exploitation of the hydro and mineral resources of Nunavik should over time justify the development of a terrestrial access to Nunavik. On the other hand, because these potentials are located so far away from the main business centers and manpower pools, the developers will continue to depend on marine and air transportation services over the next 25 years. It is in this context, that Makivik and KRG have established Nunavik's priorities for the short and the long term.

Air Transportation

The development of air transportation services in Nunavik is the result of a Partnership that shaped up over the past 30 years between the Inuit, Quebec and Canada. While the Inuit invested millions of dollars in the development of a most reliable air transportation service linking the South to the North and all fourteen northern villages of Nunavik between themselves, without any direct subsidy from the governments, Quebec and Canada have invested in the infrastructure required by said development.

Over a period of 8 years, between 1984 and 1991, airports were built in all communities except Kuujjuaq and Kuujjuaraapik. While the airlines have expanded considerably to answer regional market needs (population growth, medical services, construction of infrastructures, tourism and mining, etc...) aside from a few improvement projects and the construction of a new terminal in Kuujjuaraapik and the recent expansion of the Puvirnituk airport, the airport infrastructure have remained the same.

In 2010, the need to modernize these infrastructures calls for specific interventions in the short and the long term.

KRG, Makivik, Ait Inuit and First Air have established the priorities of this sector as following:

Over the next five years

Improvement of Air Terminal Building at all Nunavik airports excluding Kuujjuaq and Kuujjuaraapik:

- New Air Terminal Building in Puvirnituk (construction expected to start summer 2011);
- Major renovation projects on Air Terminal Buildings at Kangiqsualujjuaq, Tasiujaq, Aupaluk, Kangirsuk, Quaqtuaq, Ivujivik, Akulivik and Umiujaq.
- Enlargement of Air Terminal Buildings in Inukjuak, Salluit and Kangirsujuaq; do we mean Kangiqsujuaq ?

- Renovations of all Airport Garages.

Extension of the Kuujjuaraapik runway to 6,500 feet.

24/7 CARS services or AWOS (Automatic Weather Observation System) in Puvirnituk, Salluit, Quaqtaq and Tasiujaq.

CATSA to provide passengers screening services in Puvirnituk.

Relocation of the Kangirsuk Airport Access Road.

Follow-up climate change impacts and address issues related to Airport Infrastructures (runways, access roads, buildings);

Support financially the realization of the Air Inuit Aeronautical Complex at Montreal-Trudeau Airport to support and improve northern operations in a competitive sector. The Complex will not only be a gateway to economic development to the North but also training facility to improve the company's workforce.

Over the next 25 years

Paving of runway in Kuujjuaraapik and Puvirnituk. The paving of these runways will become a condition to maintain the jet service when the B737-200 will be replaced by newer generation aircraft not approved for gravel operations.

Acquisition of new equipment (sweeper and others) and expansion of airport garages to house new equipment.

Expansion of some Air Terminal Building as traffic increases and as tourism, mining or hydro-electric activities develop.

Expansion of some aircraft parking area as traffic increases and as tourism, mining or hydro-electric activities develop.

Marine Transportation

At the end of 2010, all fourteen marine infrastructures will be completed and no funding will be available for KRG and the northern villages for either the construction, improvement, preservation or maintenance of these assets.

At the same time important changes are made to the federal Food Mail Program which, for the past 30 years has subsidized the shipping by air of perishable and non perishable food items to Nunavik communities. Many products that were admissible under this program will not be admissible under the new Federal Nutrition Program.

To maintain the price of goods at an acceptable level, the suppliers of Nunavik will have no other alternative but to use marine transportation.

Makivik, KRG, NEAS, Desgagné and the suppliers of Nunavik therefore feel that it will be important to invest into this sector to enhance the infrastructure and increase the warehousing capacity in the region.

Over a period of 5 years

Implementation of a Marine Transportation Subsidy Program similar to the program available for the residents of the Lower North Shore.

Study the feasibility and viability of the construction of a deep sea ports in Kuujjuaq and Kuujjuaraapik.

Installation of Anchor buoys in Kuujjuaq.

Maintenance of Northern villages' marine infrastructures

Improvement to the marine navigational aids;

Over a period of 25 years

Based on the results of the feasibility studies initiate the construction of deep sea ports in Kuujjuaq and Kuujjuaraapik.

Maintenance (and major renovations) of marine infrastructures already built (Kuujjuaraapik to be completed by November 2010).

Other projects could also be contemplated should the commercial fishing industry develops.

Terrestrial Transportation

Transportation costs are a major factor contributing to the high cost of living and of doing business experienced by Nunavik residents. Since Nunavik is not connected to Quebec road and rail network, consumer goods are transported either by air or annual maritime sealift operating in the summer or early fall. Both of these methods are costly. Air transportation is inherently expensive. The sealift, the less expensive alternative has related inventorization costs such as storage and the interest of supporting a given item between the time of purchase and the date of sale, which can often go to eight months. Between the two methods, transportation costs drive prices higher by at least 20%.

In this context, the connection of Nunavik to the Québec road network constitutes the best way to reduce the cost of living for the Nunavik residents. The construction of an access should not only be considered in the context of industrial development. It should be considered as a mean to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living for the residents.

Over a period of 5 years

Consultation of the population and the region's stakeholders on the opportunity to develop terrestrial access to Nunavik based on the results of the Pre-feasibility studies realized for the construction of terrestrial links between Whapmagoostui/Kuujuaraapik and Radisson and between Kuujuaq and Caniapiscau or Schefferville., and determine the next steps for each of the project with Makivik, KRG and the concerned communities.

Development of public transportation: services in all communities.

Improvement and pavement of municipal roads in the northern villages;

Adoption of a policy with regards to the construction and maintenance of roads associated to industrial development activities including those realized for mining exploration.

Over a period of 25 years

Based on the results of the feasibility studies, realize the construction of terrestrial links between Whapmagoostui/Kuujuaraapik and Radisson and between Kuujuaq and Caniapiscau or Schefferville.