Transportation in the Peel Watershed

Presented to the Peel Watershed Planning Commission

November 7, 2005

Presentation Summary

Legislative Framework

Dempster Highway Development

Access in the Peel Watershed

Discussion

Legislative Framework

UFA and FNFAs

Highways Act

Area Development Act

Highways Act

Establish control of all Yukon highways

Regulate construction, maintenance, use and access to highways

Establish rights regarding land for highways

Administrative items – offences, penalties, etc

Area Development Act

Allows control of development in a defined area

Used to establish development control zone around Dempster – 8 km on either side from km 68 to NWT border

Dempster Highway Development Area Regulations established in 1979, minor modifications since

Only one development permit issued to date

Dempster Highway Development (history)

Part of Diefenbaker Roads to Resources policy which included Dempster, Mackenzie and other major projects in the north

First section, up to km 126, built 1959 to 1962

Remainder built from 1970 through 1978

Official opening in 1979, total cost $100 million

Dempster Highway Development (upgrades)

First section built to very low development road standard – not maintainable or safe

First phase, km 0 to km 40, rebuilt in 1977

Second phase, km 40 to km 125, rebuilt in mid 1980s. Remainder surfaced at same time

Upgrading costs were about $21 million. No major upgrading work since that time

Dempster Highway Development (current)

- Traffic volumes remain low
  - Approx 100 vehicles/day at km 0
  - About 70 at Peel River ferry
  - Growth is slow, but noticeable
- Current road standard (geometric and operational) meets current demand
- Reliability is a problem
  - Weather – no solution likely
  - Ferries – solution very expensive

Dempster Highway Development (future)

No major reconstruction plan in Yukon

Mackenzie Valley Pipeline impact minimal based on Imperial's EIS

Effect of inclusion of Dempster in National Highway System not yet clear

Current focus is to continue incremental improvements

- resurfacing
- repair of failures as they occur (washouts, etc)
- minor improvements to prevent failures

Transportation in the Peel Watershed

- Current infrastructure
  - Dempster Highway
  - Winter roads (occasionally)
  - Mining roads/trails mostly unused
  - Infrequently used airstrips

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- Current transportation demand
  - Community resupply via Dempster
  - Aircraft supported activities
    - wilderness tourism/outfitting
    - mineral exploration

- Future demand --- ?

Transportation in the Peel Watershed

Transportation has two elements

- Access
- Mobility

Most locations in Peel Watershed do not have access. There may or may not be a need for access in the future

Planning should not preclude the possibility that access can be provided in the future

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Access affects people and the environment in many ways and costs money to build and to operate

Choice of access method (air, water, ground) depends on type of development

Usually a balance must be struck between impact and cost.

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Simple approach is to identify corridors in which ground access may be located if and when its clearly necessary to do so

EMR study completed in 2003 to identify potential natural resource infrastructure access corridors

Not an approved government policy at this time but is a public document and open for discussion

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Main premise of study was “identifying the most probable locations where access corridors may need to be developed, based on potential resource developments that may occur”

Study used “reconnaissance level, desktop compilation of the resource potential of a given area, and the large scale engineering considerations that would influence the routing”

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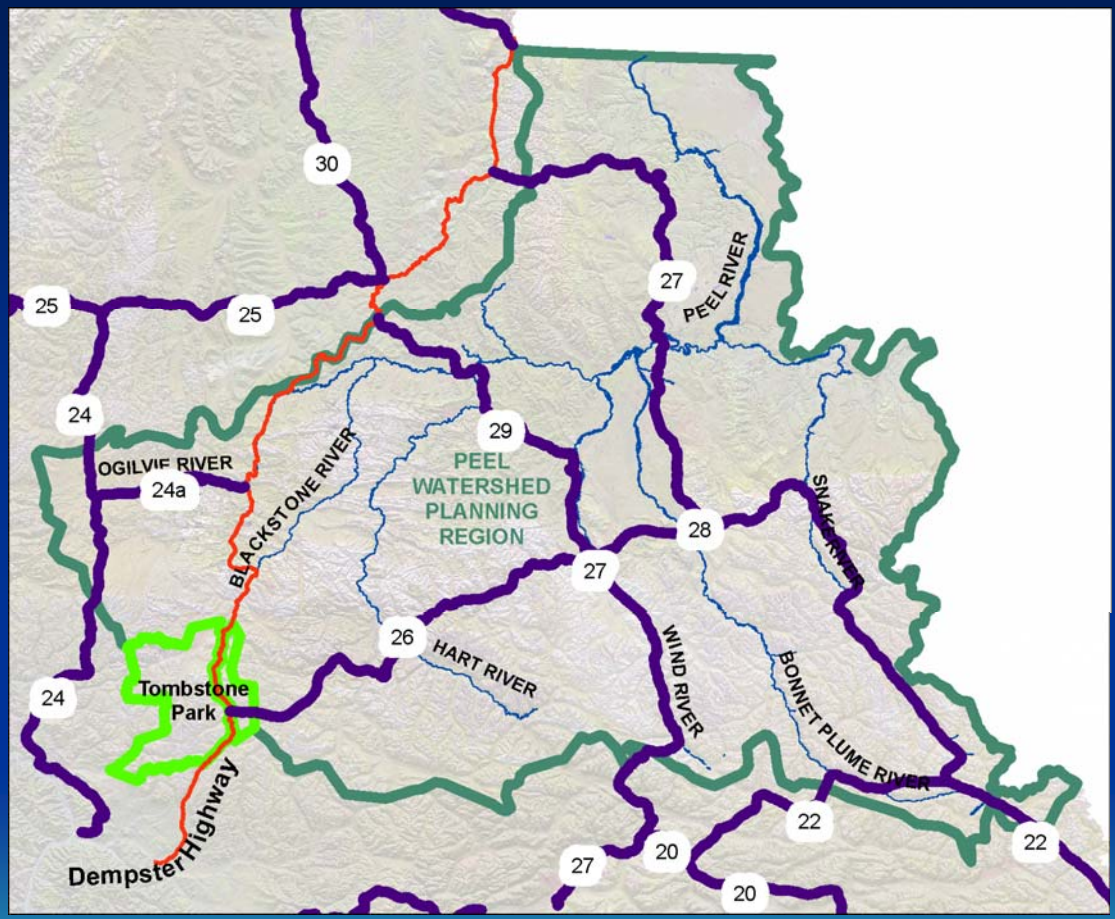

Conclusion

Transportation is demand driven. If there is no identifiable need to provide facilities, they aren't necessary

Transportation projects take a long time to develop. Environmental assessment, route location, ground investigation, design and construction are time and dollar intensive. Planning, well in advance, is essential if facilities are to be delivered when needed.