

For Immediate Release

## **Closing the Gap: How 2+1 Roads Can Save Time, Lives, and Taxpayer Dollars**

**November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023** – A new study by Northern Policy Institute finds that the implementation of 2+1 roads in the regions of Northern Ontario presents a lower-cost solution that brings similar or superior road safety than twinning. This alternative solution could help address major gaps that still exist in the province's northern highway network.

*Closing the Gap: How 2+1 Roads Can Save Time, Lives, and Taxpayer Dollars* outlines an example of how this cost-benefit can play out. Focusing on a stretch of highway between North Bay and Temiskaming Shores, for example, the paper finds that upgrading this road from two lanes to a 2+1 configuration would deliver a benefit-cost ratio of 1.01 over a 20-year period—jumping to 2.28 over a 40 year-period and to 3.64 over 60 years. (For a project to be worthwhile, the benefit-cost ratio should be equal to or higher than 1.)

Additionally, 2+1 roads would provide benefits beyond improved safety. The addition of regular passing lanes and the reduced risk of serious collisions will result in fewer delays for motorists. This will save time for local motorists and reduce disruptions to national supply chains that rely on Northern Ontario highways.

“Northern Ontario residents rely on the road network to get to family, their job, to seek specialized medical care, and more,” said author William Dunstan. “Introducing 2+1 roads would reduce their risk of encountering delays or being involved in a serious collision while using this essential infrastructure.”

The paper concludes that 2+1 should be introduced across much of the highway network in Northern Ontario. Specifically, it recommends that:

1. Most two-lane highways with annual average daily traffic between 3,000 and 20,000 vehicles should be upgraded to a 2+1 configuration, but prospective upgrades must be assessed on a case-by-case basis;
2. Specific sections of highways where 2+1 is likely to provide a positive benefit-cost mix include Highway 11 from North Bay to just west of Hearst, and Highway 17 from Mattawa to Sault Ste. Marie.

Want to learn more? Read the full commentary here: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/closing-the-gap>

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**Media Interviews:** Author William Dunstan and NPI President & CEO Charles Cirtwill are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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## About the Authors:

### William Dunstan

William Dunstan graduated from Carleton University in 2022 with an Honours Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management. During his undergraduate studies, William learned about the wide world of public policy and developed a particular research interest in economic policy and regional development. Professionally, he has worked in several policy-related roles both in the think tank sphere and with the federal government. Originally from Ottawa, William developed a love for Northeastern (or Central) Ontario and the region's high quality of living during his time as an Experience North intern in 2021.

### Bryanne de Castro Rocha

Bryanne holds a Master of Arts in Political Science from the University of Calgary, where she analyzed the relationship between sustainable development, environmental clauses in international trade agreements, and agricultural lobbying. Her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Relations explored the measurement and conceptualization of sustainable development. She is also interested in the relationship between mining operations and Indigenous communities in Canada and abroad.

### Dr. Martin Lefebvre

Born in Kirkland Lake and raised in Timmins, Martin Lefebvre, PhD, is a lifelong northerner. He left only to undertake graduate studies at the University of Western Ontario, and immediately returned. His doctoral thesis studied institutional investor location preferences in the USA in the past two decades. His other research interests include sports analytics, spatial statistics, and location theory. In his spare time, Martin likes reading, painting, fencing as well as watching baseball and Canadian football

## About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent, evidence-driven think tank. We perform research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our permanent offices are in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. Our mission is to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, our country, and our world.