Rail Policy Discontinuance and Regional Economic Analysis Project

Background

This project will hire one student whose work will include input to Transport Canada’s (TC’s) Rail Policy and Transportation Economic Analysis (TEA) for the comprehensive analysis of socio-economic data as related to the transportation network, for broader evidence base policy making and specifically the identification of rail lines listed for discontinuance. The project will provide a high-level socio-economic profiling and link to the transportation network for passenger and freight in various economic regions (up to 68 economic regions). In addition to creating a broad and well-rounded evidence base for transportation policy decisions, there is interest in documenting socio-economic data and evaluating the risks and benefits to rail movements when a rail line is discontinued.

TEA forecasts passenger and freight movements and reports on network performance, and TC’s Rail Policy is developing its first phase of a national portrait of lines listed for discontinuance. The information gathered will also help contribute to the national analysis of performance of the transportation system, undertaken in collaboration between TC’s Rail Policy and TC’s Transportation Economic Analysis (TEA) Directorate, as well as regional offices. The end result will support senior management briefings on transportation related matters.

Student project

Over the winter/spring session (January to May 2021), one student from the University of Ottawa would be directed by TEA’s analyst Ana Julia Amezaga and project manager Chantal Ayotte, with communication with Rob Ford and Geneviève DeBlois from TC’s Rail Policy.

The work description would be to build a multi-faceted socio-economic template to help inform a variety of policy decisions regarding the discontinuance of specific rail lines and other broader transportation decisions taken by the Department of Transportation. This template will individually cover each of the 68 regions, and complete analysis would be obtained for at least two regions. The economic impact and considerations, along with an executive summary could complement the two completed templates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Milestone</th>
<th>Winter/Spring 2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submission of project proposal to UofO</td>
<td>December 15</td>
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<td>Submission of applications by students</td>
<td>January 4</td>
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Sponsors and students informed about outcome of matching | January 6-7
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Student interviews with sponsors | January 8-21
Last day for students to register in ECO4150 – decision for project is made | January 22
Student works on project, and is in weekly contact with Transport Canada | January to April
Classes end | April 14
Final Exam Period | April 16-29
Students submit draft to supervisors (recommendation) | April 7
Students submit final draft and report to Director | April 28
Supervisor submits evaluation to Director | May 5

Contacts
From TC’s TEA Senior Policy Analyst, Ana Julia Amezaga; Project Manager, Chantal Ayotte.

Options for contacts to hire students
- From University of Ottawa,
  - Department of Economics, Kathleen Day, directed research projects in economics.

Resources
- TC’s Transportation Economic Analysis (TEA) Daniel Saladini provided data on rail movements for the last five years.
- TC’s Trade Policy Ian Tyrrell could contribute with regional transportation assessments, showing how goods are moving in Central, East and West regions.
- TC’s regional offices contributed qualitative information.

Project background and detailed description
This project will be useful for all Transportation discussions and decisions where the economic profile of regions for passenger or freight transportation is used.

- The contribution of this project will be a design of a framework that is easy to update with socio-economic data linked to the transportation network of each region.
economic region in Canada. This is to help inform TEA’s analysis of network performance and forecasting.

- In one project, it will not be possible to complete all 68 economic regions, but a comprehensive data-template could be built and one or two regions could be completed. TC’s Rail Policy and TEA would decide on which regions to be completed first.

- Some of the questions to be answered by the template and report could include other transport opportunities within the region selected, the transportation alternatives if we discontinue the lines, and a list of resources available and impacted by the change in that region.

- Part of the scope would also be the understanding of the discontinuance process of federally regulated rail lines, learning about how TC collaborates on common topics at the national level, introduction to the role of the Canadian Transportation Agency versus TC’s role on that topic, identification of some of the lines, high priority to less pressing options, from the existing template.

- TEA could incorporate these questions on the discontinuance of rail lines depending on size of population in a particular area. TEA has access to Statistics Canada’s population forecast. TEA also collects regional economic projections. NRCan has a list of major projects, mines they expect to be built in the future, and utility projects.

- Regional offices have provided qualitative information to be built into this template and report. Regional offices will be interested in a short presentation, which could also be beneficial for the student.

- This project will include only non-sensitive information and will not require a security clearance.

Contact person
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