

SYNOPSIS

The community of Shamattawa, with its population of 920 people, is entirely reliant on a 200 km winter road and scheduled air service for the transport of goods and people. Gillam and Thompson represent its closest and primary destination points, although some medical transport goes directly to Winnipeg.

The existing winter road requires a five to six hour travel time to Gillam and then another three hours by All-Weather Road to Thompson. Air travel time to Thompson is in the order of one hour and fifteen minutes.

There is considerable concern about the reliability of the winter road, particularly as it relates to major stream crossings, steep grades, and roadway widths. Also, weather conditions can adversely affect both the road and air travel.

Based on a very preliminary transportation cost analysis, there is not a strong economic case to be made for building an All-Weather Road. The 20-year present value of transportation benefits covers only 35% of All-Weather Road costs of \$100 Million or more. The project would require significant additional justification on a socioeconomic basis in order to become a funding priority.

In the short-term, Shamattawa's situation could be improved if permanent structures were built at key stream crossings, the road was widened, and steep grades were eliminated. In the long-term, it may be possible to improve the winter road operation and coordinate this with a subsidized freight operation.

However, it would be desirable to confirm or modify the existing winter/All-Weather Road alignment at an early date. This would ensure that short-term investments also serve long-term objectives.