



Road Talk

Ontario's Transportation
Technology Transfer
Digest

Ministry of Transportation

Spring 2026

A project evaluating a 2+1 highway design hopes to improve safety and traffic flow in northern Ontario

Once implemented, Ontario will host the first 2+1 highway in North America, setting a new standard for road safety

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is launching a groundbreaking project to enhance road safety in northern Ontario with a 2+1 highway pilot that could revolutionize transportation in the region and set new standards for road design across North America.

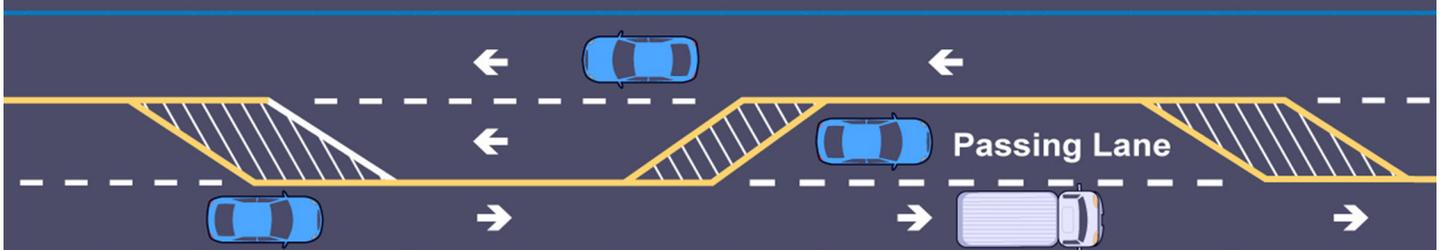
A project to assess the 2+1 highway design will take place at two locations on Highway 11 near North Bay: from Sand Dam Road to Ellsmere Road (14 km) and from north of Highway 64 to Jumping Caribou Lake Road (11 km).

Innovative Highway Design

2+1 highways feature three lanes: one travelling in each direction and a passing lane that changes direction every few kilometres. The 2+1 model also features a median barrier to allow for safer passing, better traffic flow and to reduce the likelihood of collisions.

If MTO's pilot is successful, Ontario would become the first jurisdiction in North America with a 2+1 highway.

First 2+1 Highway Pilot in North America



An illustration of the proposed 2+1 highway design.

Project Timeline and Development

Design and environmental assessment (EA) work on Highway 11 from Sand Dam Road to Ellsmere Road is expected to be completed by 2027, while the design and EA work from north of Highway 64 to Jumping Caribou Lake Road is anticipated to be completed by fall 2028. Construction will proceed following the completion of these phases.

Timelines may change due to factors such as property acquisitions, utility relocations, turnaround design and location, consultation and steps to mitigate the risk of collisions with wildlife.

Safety and Collaboration

[Going the Extra Mile](#) for Safety (GEMS), part of the Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce, advocated for the pilot project and helped select the pilot's locations in northern Ontario. MTO formed a 2+1 Advancement Working Group and consulted with road authorities from Sweden, Ireland and Australia that had implemented 2+1 highway models in their own jurisdictions.

The pilot locations were chosen based on factors such as highway traffic volumes and winter maintenance activities.

Community and Indigenous Engagement

MTO sought the public's input through its [Technical Consultation Portal](#), and in-person public information sessions that took place in November 2024. Several communities expressed support for the 2+1 design's potential to improve road safety.

MTO is consulting with Temagami First Nation and Nipissing First Nation on the pilot project. A Community Information Session (CIS) with Temagami First Nation took place in December 2024 and a joint council meeting was conducted in March 2025. MTO organized a CIS with Nipissing First Nation in April 2025.

The ministry is dedicated to safety, innovation and community collaboration. The insights gained from this project could prove crucial to the future of road travel and road safety in Ontario and beyond.

Next Steps

This pilot project is a significant step toward safer roads in Ontario. By incorporating international expertise and community support, this initiative aims to establish new standards for road safety. If successful, the pilot could lead to the adoption of similar highways across North America.

For more information and updates on the new highway design, visit the [Ontario ministry dedicated 2+1 project website](#), or contact:

Ron Turcotte, Manager, Engineering, Engineering Program Delivery Northeast,
at 705-492-1676, or Ron.Turcotte@ontario.ca

You may also visit the Ontario Newsroom for the [December 2021 project news release](#).

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