

HIGHWAY 11/17 FOUR-LANING
from Pearl Lake, Easterly to 2.8 km West of CPR
Overhead at Ouimet
Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study



Online Public Information Centre #1

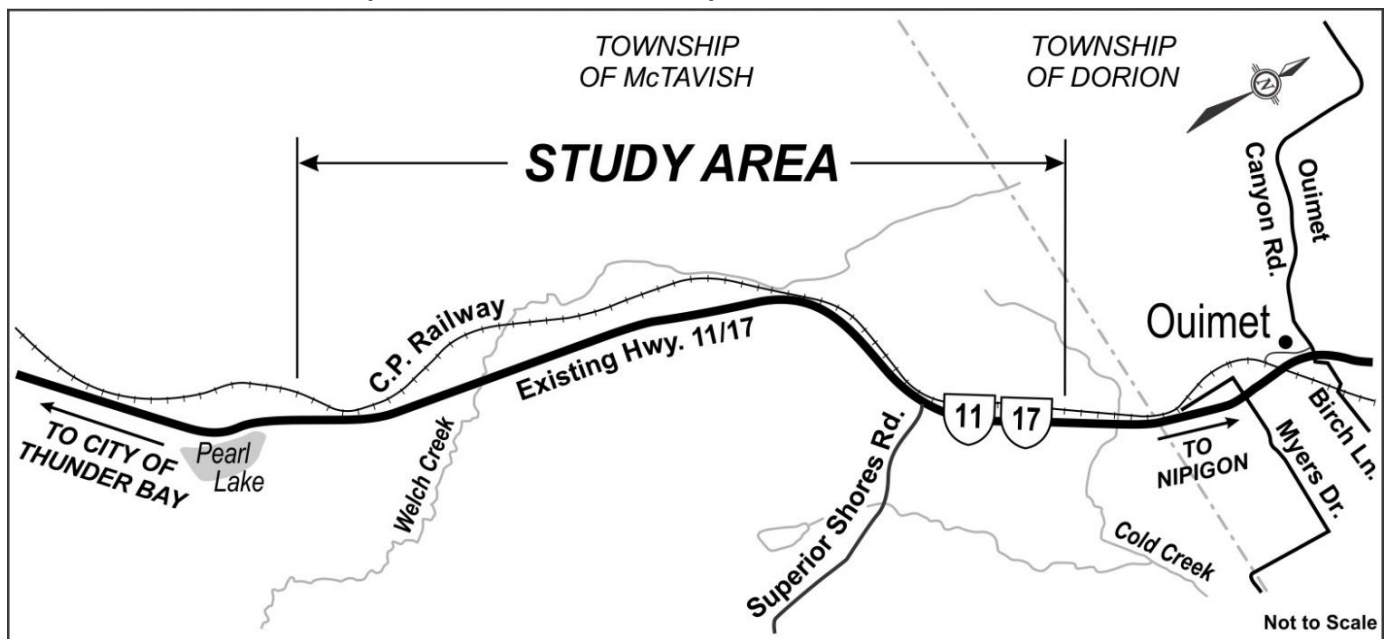
Please visit the project website at:
www.Hwy11-17Four-Laning-PearlLake

WELCOME

Welcome to the first Public Information Centre (PIC) for the Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study for Highway 11/17 four-laning from Pearl Lake, easterly to 2.8 km west of CPR Overhead at Ouimet, for 7.6 km. The purpose of this study is to finalize design parameters and secure approvals for the design and construction of the project.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) acknowledges that it is on lands traditionally occupied by Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the Anishnaabe peoples, in the Robinson Superior Treaty area. We wish to recognize the neighbouring communities of Fort William First Nation and the long history of First Nations and the Métis in Ontario, and show respect to them today. Indigenous People continue to care for this land and they continue to shape Ontario today - the Ministry wishes to show its respect. Hundreds of years after the first treaties were signed, they are still relevant today.

You are encouraged to ask questions or provide comments to the Project Team by email or phone. Please use the comment form on the project website (www.Hwy11-17Four-Laning-PearlLake) under "Contact Us" or by using the contact information provided on the last panel.



Highway 11/17 Four-Laning from Pearl Lake, Easterly to 2.8 km

West of CPR Overhead at Ouimet

Class Environmental Assessment Study

Online Public Information Centre #1

July 2021



VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Due to the on-going global pandemic, the first Public Information Centre (PIC) for this study is being held virtually instead of the in-person open house format.

This virtual engagement is to adhere to Ontario Public Health guidelines and provides the following benefits to our stakeholders:

- Avoids group gatherings during the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- Stakeholders may review the information provided at their own time and leisure.
- Comments may be easily submitted using the online comment form on the project website.

MTO and WSP staff are also available to discuss the project and any questions that you may have at anytime. Contact information is provided on the last panel and the Project Team will respond to all comments received.



BACKGROUND

- In 1989, the Province made an announcement to four-lane Highway 11/17 from Thunder Bay to Nipigon.
- In 1997, the Planning and Preliminary Design Study for the Four-Laning of Highway 11/17 from 8 km west of Ouimet easterly 36 km to the Red Rock Township West Boundary was completed. An Environmental Study Report (ESR) was filed in September 1997 and received environmental clearance.
- In 2018, MTO retained WSP to undertake an Environmental Assessment (EA) Update for the project.
- The original Commencement Notice for this project was issued in August 2018. This study will review the previously approved Environmental Assessment (EA) Plan documented in the 1997 Environmental Study Report (ESR) as well as potential changes to the highway alignment and access based on current design standards and efforts to minimize environmental impacts.



Existing Highway 11/17

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND PIC #1



Highway 11/17

The purpose of this study is to build upon the Planning and Preliminary Design (completed in 1997).

PIC #1 provides information on:

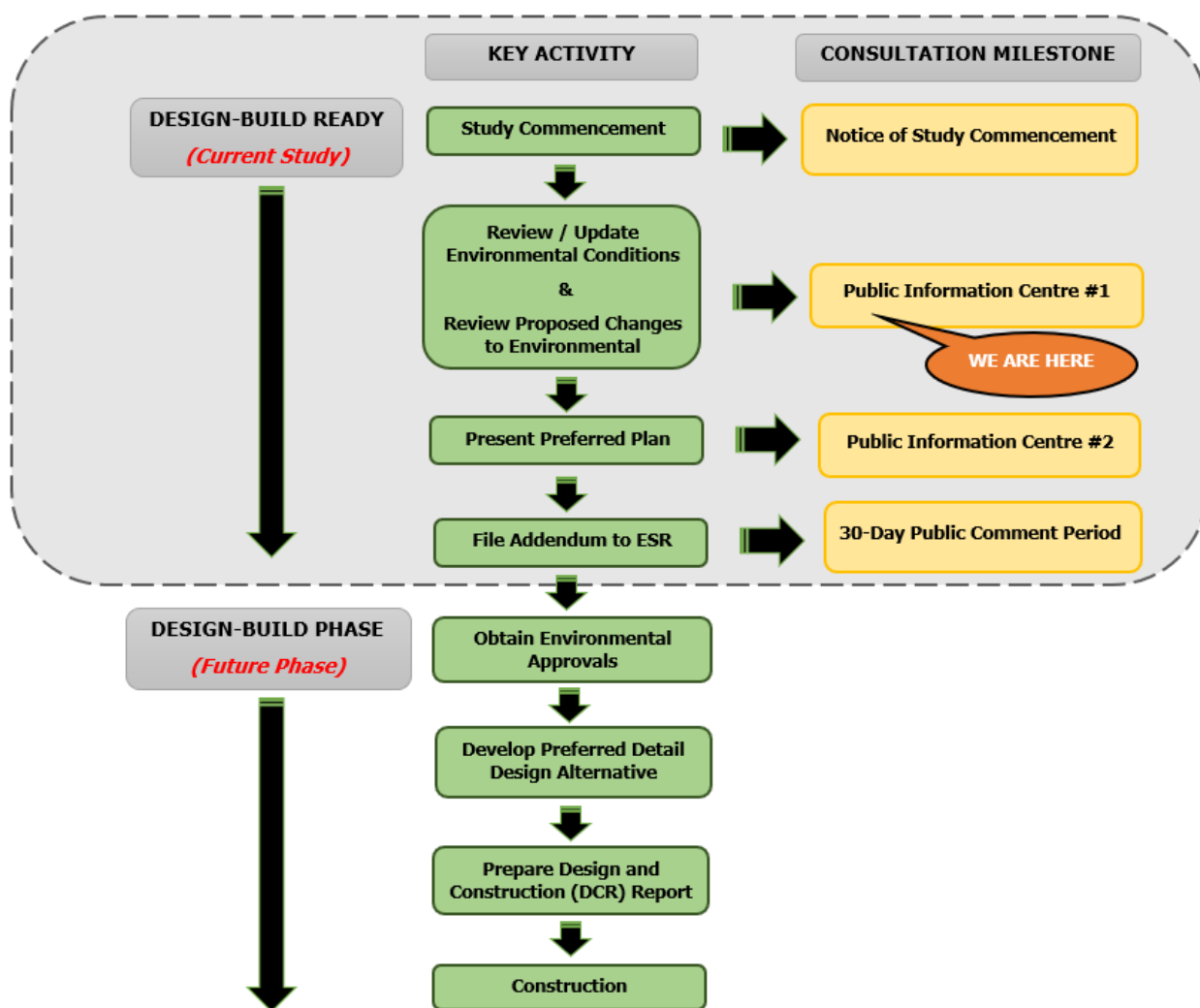
- The overall study process;
- Updated existing environmental conditions;
- A review of the 1997 EA Approved Plan; and
- A review of potential changes to improve the 1997 EA Approved Plan based on current design standards and review of an alternative route for proposed eastbound lanes.

A second PIC will be held later in the study.

The recommended highway alignment and access options, anticipated environmental impacts and mitigation measures will be developed and presented at Public Information Centre #2 (PIC #2).

STUDY PROCESS

This project is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities* (2000) as a Group 'B' undertaking. Throughout the study process, input will be sought from the Indigenous Communities, public and external agencies.



HIGHWAY 11/17 FOUR-LANING PROJECT BENEFITS

Highway 11/17 is being four-laned between Thunder Bay and Nipigon to provide the benefits listed below. The next display presents the current status of four-laning of Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon.

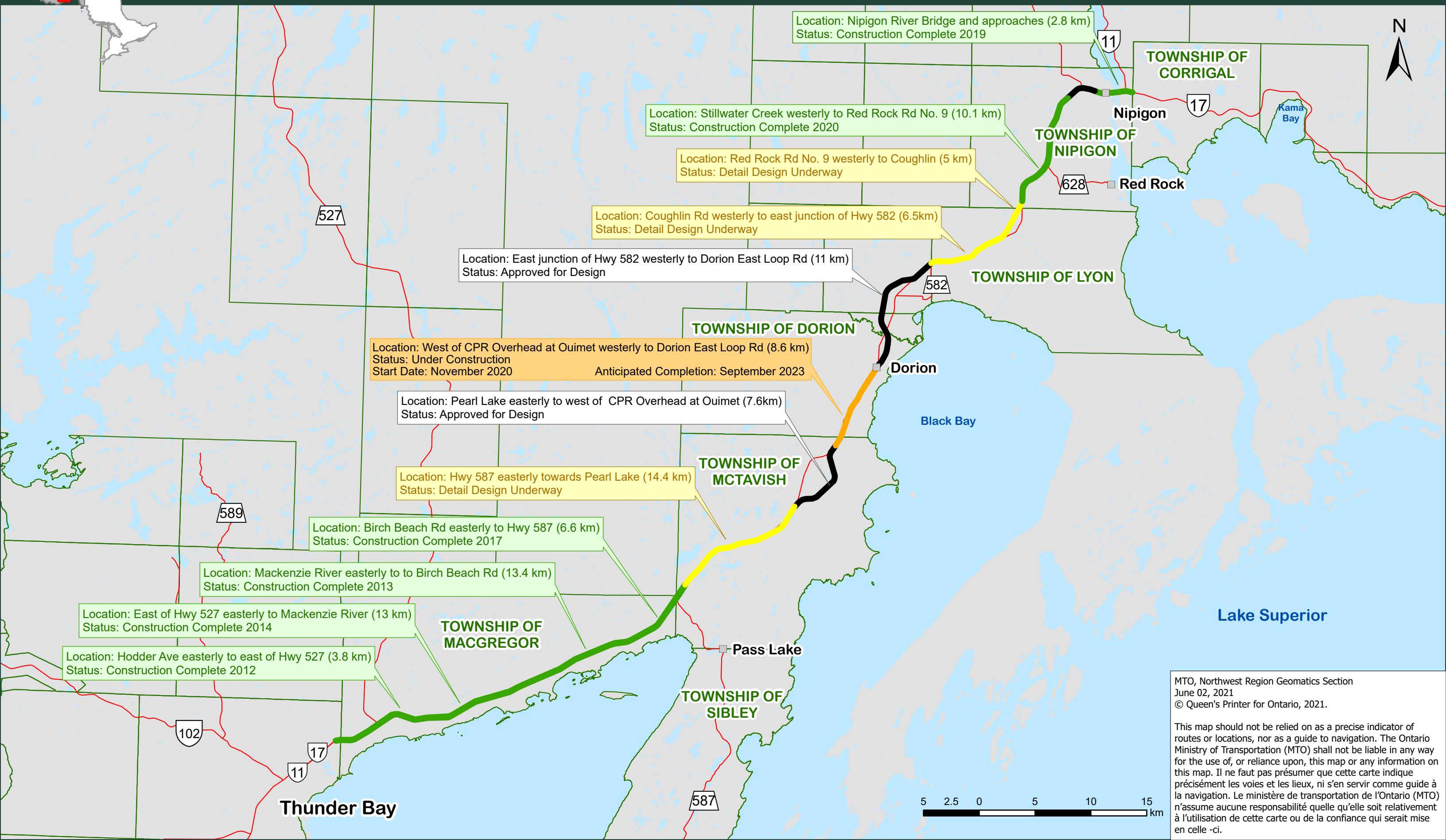
- Improved traffic flow due to reduced delays caused by slower moving vehicles;
- Improved movement of goods and services which will have a positive economic impact on the area;
- Reduced risk of collisions and decreased severity of some types of collisions.
- Addressed future travel demand along the highway, and
- The new four-lane highway will allow for a parallel, continuous, alternative route system in the event of roadway collisions, natural disasters or structural loss which could lead to the closure of the existing highway.



Example of a Four-Laned Highway

Ministry of Transportation

Current Status of Hwy 11/17 Four Laning - Thunder Bay to Nipigon



MTO, Northwest Region Geomatics Section
June 02, 2021
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This map should not be relied on as a precise indicator of routes or locations, nor as a guide to navigation. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) shall not be liable in any way for the use of, or reliance upon, this map or any information on this map. Il ne faut pas présumer que cette carte indique précisément les voies et les lieux, ni s'en servir comme guide à la navigation. Le ministère de transport de l'Ontario (MTO) n'assume aucune responsabilité quelle qu'elle soit relativement à l'utilisation de cette carte ou de la confiance qui serait mise en celle-ci.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS UPDATE

This study includes reviewing and updating the existing environmental conditions within the study limits to determine if there have been any significant changes to the existing conditions since the 1997 Environmental Study Report that may affect the review of the Highway 11/17 four-laning. Existing environmental conditions has not significantly changed since 1997. Existing environmental conditions include:

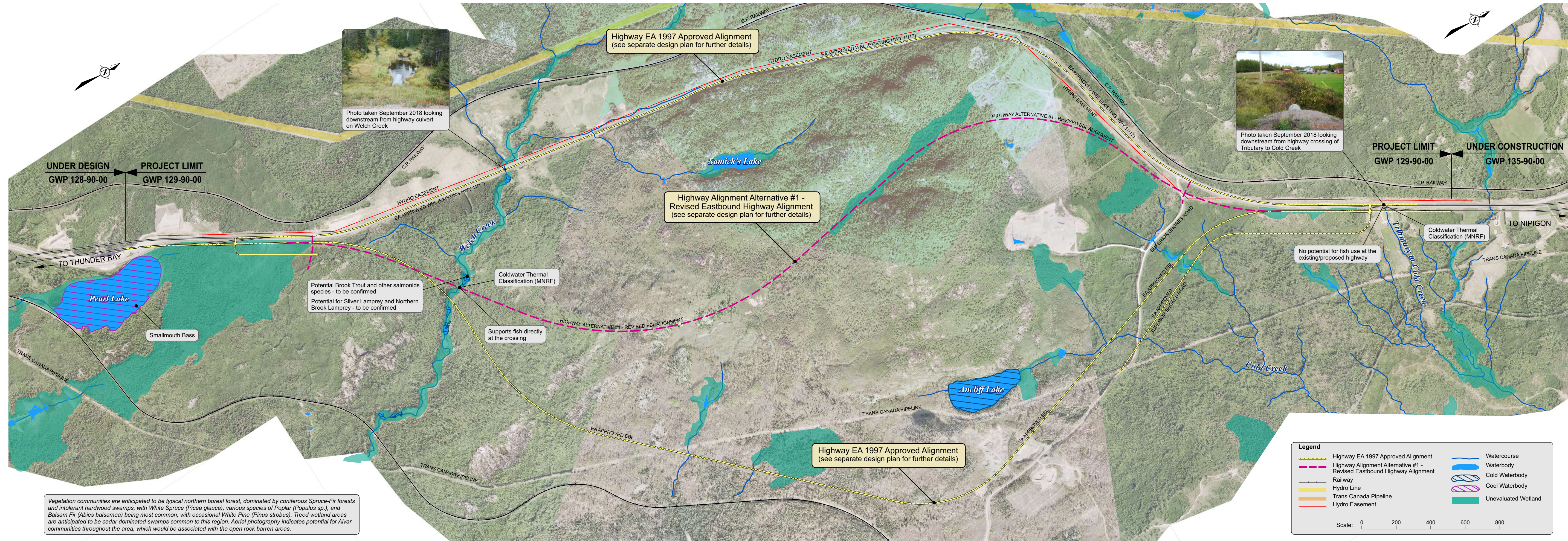
- Typical northern boreal forest with open barren areas throughout the study area
- Treed wetland areas are anticipated to be cedar dominated swamps common to this region.
- Welch Creek and tributaries to Cold Creek have coldwater thermal classifications.
- Utilities include Hydro One lines and easements and TransCanada Pipelines.
- CP Railway lines.

Terrestrial, fisheries, archaeological, noise, and contamination investigations are ongoing to confirm existing environmental conditions and assess potential environmental impacts.

The mapping below presents the existing environmental conditions that are in the process of being updated for this study.

Please review and provide any comments or updates!

EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS



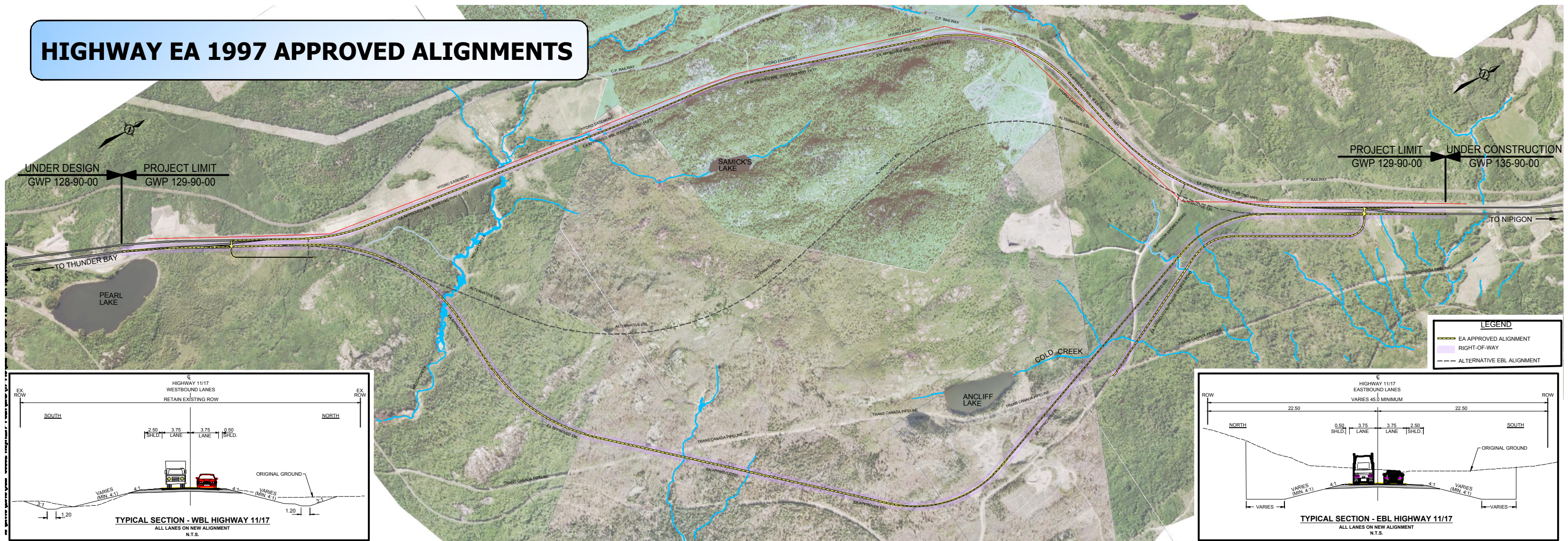
REVIEW OF 1997 EA APPROVED PLAN & HIGHWAY ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE #1

This study includes a review of the 1997 EA Approved Plan. The next two displays present the 1997 **EA Approved** Plan and a revised eastbound highway alignment (**Highway Alignment Alternative #1**). Areas of focus include:

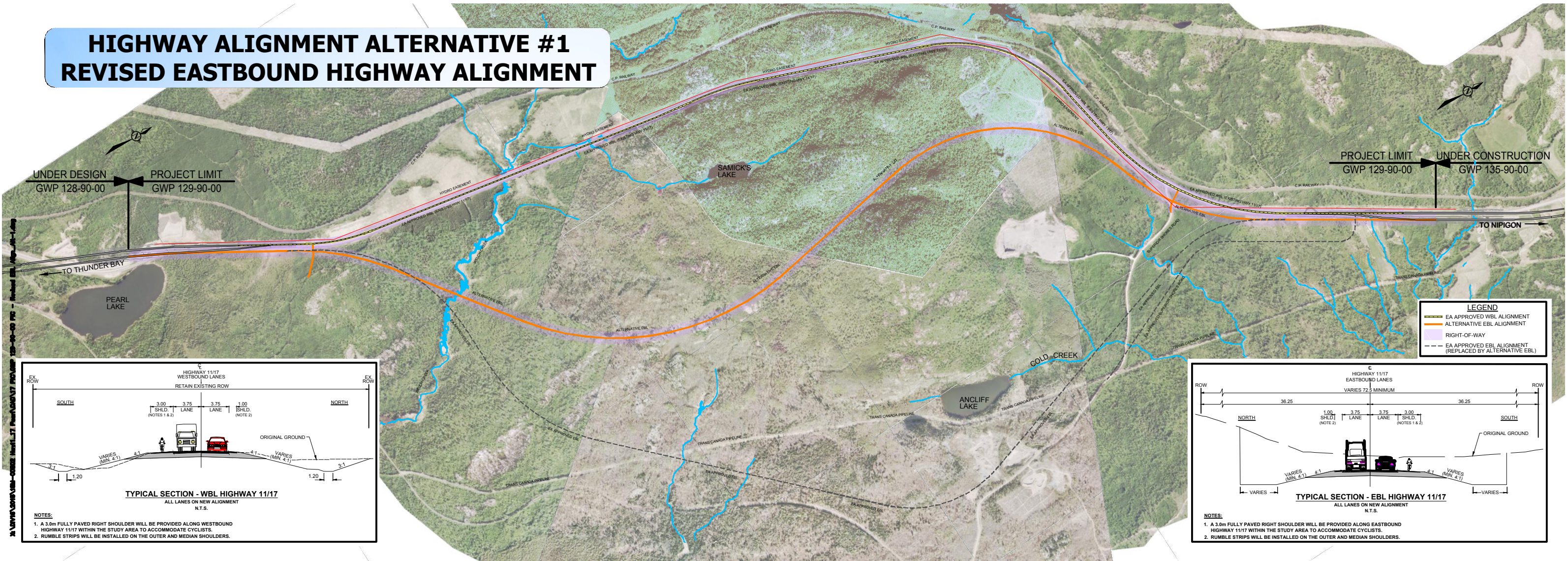
Component	Highway EA 1997 Approved Alignment	Highway Alignment Alternative #1 Revised Eastbound Highway Alignment
Highway Alignment	EA Approved Plan includes retaining the existing highway as the future westbound lanes and a new route is proposed for eastbound lanes south of the hill from Welch Creek up to Superior Shores Road, then twinning on the south side of the existing highway from Superior Shores Road up to the eastern project limits.	<p>A new highway alignment for the future eastbound lanes is being reviewed to identify opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce overall construction length;• Reduce environmental impacts;• Improve constructability; and• Minimize impacts to existing utility and railway corridors. <p>This alternative continues to retain the same westbound lanes from the EA Approved Plan.</p>
Side Road Access	EA Approved Plan includes an at-grade intersection at Superior Shores Road.	Revised highway alignment maintains an at-grade intersection at Superior Shores Road.
Highway Cross-Section	The EA Approved Plan includes a 45 m right-of-way for the new alignment for the eastbound lanes. The right-of-way is proposed to be increased to a 72.5 m basic right-of-way for the proposed eastbound to accommodate revisions to highway engineering design and safety standards that have occurred since the 1997 ESR.	

Please review the alternatives on the next displays and provide comments!

HIGHWAY EA 1997 APPROVED ALIGNMENTS



HIGHWAY ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVE #1 REVISED EASTBOUND HIGHWAY ALIGNMENT



PROPOSED EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following list of factors will be considered in the evaluation of the highway alignment alternatives / access options.

Factor	Indicator
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of Natural Habitat Fragmentation • Extent of Impacts to Natural Features • Extent of Vegetation Community Removal • Potential Impacts to Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat • Impact to Fish and Aquatic Resources
Socio-Economic and Cultural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Requirements • Noise • Archaeological Resources
Transportation/Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility to Accommodate Municipal Road Connections • Highway Geometrics • Intersection Spacing • Flexibility to Accommodate Future Interchanges • Complexity and Difficulty of Construction • Geotechnical Suitability • Impacts to Utilities • Structures
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Cost • Utility Relocation Cost • Property Requirement Cost

Please provide any comments you may have regarding the evaluation criteria through the online comment form that is available on the website, or using the contact information provided on the last panel.

PERMISSION TO ENTER

Field investigations are required to inventory the natural, social and cultural environmental features in the study area. Potentially impacted property owners will be directly contacted and Permission to Enter (PTE) forms will be provided. Property owner cooperation through the signing and returning of PTE forms is greatly appreciated. The PTE will allow Ministry staff and/or WSP and/or their subconsultants to access lands which may be impacted by the alternative alignment / accesses in order to obtain applicable field information.

You may see surveyors, soil investigations crews and site reconnaissance staff. The types of field investigations include the following and will be undertaken by specialists from firms identified in brackets:

Discipline	Type of Field Investigation
Natural Environment (WSP)	Fisheries, Wildlife, Wetlands, Vegetation, Groundwater
Socio-Economic Environment (WSP)	Noise, Potentially Contaminated Sites
Cultural Environment (WSP)	Archaeology and Built Heritage
Engineering (WSP, Tulloch, and Thurber Engineering)	Drainage Surveys, Geotechnical (soils) Investigations

MINERAL AGGREGATES

Mineral aggregates, such as good quality sand and gravel, are a vital construction material required for Ministry of Transportation undertakings. The *Aggregate Resources Act* ensures that environmental concerns associated with aggregate extraction operations are addressed. In accordance with this legislation, MTO reviews possible environmental concerns associated with aggregate operations (excluding commercial licensed operations) expressed by Government Agencies, local municipalities and the public, when applicable to site-specific projects.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

A MTO and Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) protocol identifies material-by-material management options both inside and outside the construction area, which includes the right-of-way and property with a boundary contiguous to the right-of-way. All excess materials may be reused or recycled. Inside the right-of-way, materials such as asphalt, concrete, swamp material, wood, earth, and rock may be reused as a construction material or managed as fill. Materials also may be temporarily stockpiled in preparation for these uses.

Management of excess materials outside the right-of-way, stockpiling, and wood management depends on local circumstances.

Site protection is provided by the imposition of constraints and for the protection of water and air quality adapted from existing legislation. The constraint on the management of these materials also involves discussions and written agreements with property owners, and may involve consultation with MECP and other authorities. Where an excess material management option cannot meet constraints, another option must be pursued, or the material must be disposed of as waste.

EMERGENCY SPILL RESPONSE

Direct responsibility for containment and clean-up of spills and abandoned materials on MTO highway facilities rests with the owner of the material and person in control of the material at the time of the spill or abandonment.

Where spills or abandoned materials occur on MTO highway facilities, MTO may assist where persons legally responsible cannot be located or not able to respond. MTO assistance may include notification of authorities, provision of equipment and materials, and traffic management.

In the event of a spill of MTO material by MTO staff, MTO undertakes all notification, containment and cleanup responsibilities required by provincial and federal legislation.

NEXT STEPS

The Project Team will:

Activity	Anticipated Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review the comments received during and following PIC #1 and respond to any questions.	Fall 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review the 1997 EA Plan and potential alignment/access road alternatives and continue to update the existing environmental conditions via field investigations.	Winter / Spring / Summer 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hold PIC #2 to present the recommended highway alignment and access options, and the anticipated environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures.	Fall 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prepare the Addendum to the 1997 Environmental Study Report to document any proposed design changes and submit for a 30-day public review period.	Winter 2023

Please visit the project website for updates at:

www.Hwy11-17Four-Laning-PearlLake

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Information collected during this study will be used to assist the Ministry of Transportation in meeting the requirements of the *Ontario Environmental Assessment Act*. This material will be maintained on file for use during the study and may be included in the study documentation.

Information collected will be used in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

CONTACT INFORMATION

You are encouraged to contact the Project Team members noted below if you have questions or concerns on the study.

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Please feel free to email any comments or questions to either of the contacts listed above, or by visiting the project website at anytime during the study

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